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HENRY MASTERTON.

VOL. II.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY SAMUEL BENTLEY,
Dorset Street, Fleet Street.

HENRY MASTERTON;

OR THE

ADVENTURES OF A YOUNG CAVALIER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "RICHELIEU," "DARNLEY," &c.

Nay, droop not : being is not breath ;
'Tis fate that friends must part :
But God will bless in life, in death,
The noble soul, the gentle heart.

J. G. LOCKHART.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1832.

HENRY MASTERTON.

CHAPTER I.

THAT we, creatures of dust and ashes, should dream of happiness,—should hope for enjoyment! 'Tis a madness!—'tis a folly! The very perfections of our corporeal frame render us peculiarly susceptible to bodily pain; and the refined essence of our other being, which commands, but cannot govern our clay, raises us above all the insects of the earth, chiefly by the fearful supremacy of mental agony—and yet the mind may do much, if properly exerted. It cannot remove the evil, but it can teach us to bear it: it cannot assuage the pang, but it can enable us to suppress its expression. If it

be the noblest effort of the reflecting soul, to conquer the passions of the animal, and even the finer yearnings of the heart, to compel ourselves to do our duty in despite of opposing circumstances and our own desires, surely the triumph can never be complete when the victor over himself, writhes under his own conquest.

Such were the reflections that grew out of my grief, after an hour's indulgence had exhausted its first violence; and the resolutions which I took at that moment, and which I adhered to long, with unshaken perseverance, were such as those reflections might naturally inspire: to conquer and to command myself; to see my hopes torn from me—not without a pang, but without a murmur; and by neither word nor action to betray to any one the agony of spirit under which I laboured.

I had at length learned what were my real feelings towards Emily Langleigh. I had at length discovered how—and how deeply I loved her. But while I made the discovery, I felt the double pang of knowing that she could

never be mine ; and that she was destined to wed a man who could not value her as she ought to be valued—who could not feel towards her the only affection that ought to make woman happy. Frank could not but admire the young and blossoming charms of her person ; he could not but esteem the sweet and gentle nature of her heart ; he could not but respect the fine and powerful qualities of her mind ; but he could not love her as I could love—and I felt that nothing less ought to be her lot. Had I believed that the same intense and ardent feelings could exist within his bosom which existed within mine, I could have yielded her—not without a sigh—but with less pain. But to dream of her wedding a man who loved another, was misery indeed ; and yet, that man was my brother, and I was bound to silence. His passion for Lady Eleanor, however open and undisguised it had been to me, was in the guardianship of my honour, and my lips were sealed by every duty ;—I resolved therefore to suffer.

It were almost useless to inquire how or why I had remained so blind to what was passing in

my own bosom, in regard to that dear, beautiful girl, during all the time of our early familiarity, and during all the efforts I had made to detach my brother from another pursuit. I had been taught from our first acquaintance to consider her as destined to him : nor had I well known what love is. In my endeavours, too, to win my brother from his passion for another woman, my mind had been too much engaged in the cause of his honour and his happiness to remember myself, or to connect what I was then doing, except very remotely, with the idea of Emily Langleigh. I did not forget, indeed, that at some distant period she was to be his wife ; but it was a contemplation far off and indistinct ; something that remained upon my mind more as a matter of habit than of active memory or thought. But in those scenes at Penford-bourne, I had learned to know what love really is. I had seen it in its most fiery and most overpowering form ; and it wanted but an impulse to make me apply the key which I had there acquired, to read the passion in my own heart. I had never seen Frank kiss the

cheek of Emily Langleigh in my life before ; and now, when he did so at his return, it passed like fire along my veins, and the secret of my own feelings was spoken to me at once.

And now, too, I felt that I had to resign it all ; for to me, the future communion with that dear and beloved being must be ever mingled with bitterness : the *spes animi credula mutui* must be at an end ; and, like the awful warning written above the Persian's throne, to keep in his mind that death was the end of all his glory, the words *she can never be mine* were destined to sadden each moment that I passed beside her. The long, dreamy conversations ; the wild enthusiastic rambles ; the pauses on the hill to mark the beauty of the scene, and to pour the rapturous overflowings of our young feelings into each other's hearts ; or the morning spent by the sea-side, enjoying the repose of the summer air, and the murmur of the soft unwinded waves, and creating for ourselves an atmosphere of visionary happiness, must now, if ever indulged in, be, on my part, full of the miserable knowledge that the sweet companion

who gave sunshine to the world of my existence, could never, never be mine!—that she was destined to be the bride of another:—that the common competition which was allowed to the meanest hind, was denied to me:—that I must yield her without striving, and lose her without hope

Oh! how truly yet in some instances, even in ordinary life, does the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, betoken the loss of happiness. Had I never known that I loved her—had that conviction never flashed across my mind, I might still have been happy for long—I might still have enjoyed to the full all the pleasures that could honourably have been mine—and only learned to be wretched at last. But now, I felt that continual sorrow must follow my steps, and that a drop of poison was mingled for me with the cup of life, pervading it all from the brim to the very dregs.

My determination, however, was to drink it off without a shudder; and when that determination was once formed, I paused but a few minutes to collect my thoughts, and prepare

for the task. Aware of the powerful nature of example, but wanting knowledge of the world to yield me those tangible and living types which might have afforded me a better strength than my own, I strove to place before my eyes some model for imitation from what I had read. I called up to my mind the ancient philosophers of Greece ; I thought of Socrates and his bowl of hemlock ; I pondered a moment on the Stoic, and a moment on the Platonic philosophy ; and out of both I worked up a sort of system for my future conduct. There was in it, a degree both of the puerility of a schoolboy and the visionary strength of an enthusiast ; but yet, as I paused and pondered upon the firm and unshrinking nature of the great of other days, I found a new vigour spring up in my heart — a power of commanding my own emotions, which I had sadly wanted before. I remained a few moments longer to think calmly over my fate, and to let my resolution fix itself by the contemplation of the greatest evils that could ultimately befall me ; and then, unlocking my door, I went down to the common apartment

where the whole family usually met. They were now all assembled there ; and when I came in, all their eyes turned upon me.

“ I can easily understand, my dear Harry,” said my father kindly, “ that your return to your home and your native place, after so many scenes of danger and difficulty, must agitate you greatly ; but, really, you ought not to give way to such sudden bursts of feeling. Here is the Lady Emily has been not a little anxious for you. You should learn to command yourself.”

“ I have been tutoring myself to do so, my Lord,” I replied ; and advanced towards Emily, to take the hand she held out towards me. The eye of my brother Frank rested on me as I did so, with a calm, satisfied, but peculiar expression, which made me almost fancy that he saw into my bosom. From my manner, however, I do not think he could detect any thing ; for I strove strongly—and, I think, successfully—to cover the feelings of which I had become so lately aware, under precisely the same manner which had before concealed them

from every body, while they had been hidden from myself. Nevertheless, there was something of agitation in Emily herself, which I dared not scrutinize, for fear of shaking all the resolution I had built up. I saw her colour come and go ; I saw her eye look brightly up, and then fall ; and, after a few words of kindly greeting, I turned away.

It was a relief to me when my father began to speak of the various incidents of our short campaign, and to ask, in his brief, generalizing manner, the particulars of those events which tended to the greatest political results. Not so, however, to my brother, who with some precipitation answered Lord Masterton's first inquiries, by telling him that he had been wounded in such a manner, and at such a period, as to be obliged to leave me to command the regiment during the more important events of the enterprise. He reddened while he spoke ; but this piece of insincerity passed current ; and my father, after asking the nature of his wounds, without inquiring where or how they had been received, proceeded to speak with me upon the conduct

of the regiment in battle, and all the circumstances in which I had been placed.

I told my tale as well as I could ; and related the incidents of the rising in Kent, more as a youth recounting his first exploits, than either officer or politician. My own feelings I dwelt upon, and all the objects as they had struck me, during the new scenes through which I had passed ; but I am afraid I left my father the trouble of drawing all his own conclusions in regard to the consequences of the events which I narrated. There was one person, however, whom my history seemed to interest deeply, for, as I spoke, Emily drew nearer and nearer ; and though she kept her eyes upon her embroidery, I could see that she was listening to every word, by the varying colour in her soft cheek, which changed from pale to red, and then to pale again, like a light cloud as it comes near and passes by the evening sun. My father was particularly struck with my account of little Ball-o'-fire, and ordered him to be brought in, that he might see him. While the servant charged to fetch him was gone to

the stable, where the boy had already quartered himself, my brother left the room; and fortunate it was that he did so. The servant was absent only a few minutes, during which time Lord Masterton drew from me all the little I knew concerning the state of parties, and the political movements in the counties near the metropolis; and, at the end of that period, the soldier's child was brought in, clothed nearly as I had first seen him; for I had not yet had time to make any great addition to his very scanty wardrobe.

After asking several questions, to which the boy replied with the keen brevity which he had learned in scenes of haste and danger, and with a degree of irreverent boldness, to which Lord Masterton was not very much accustomed, my father demanded, "Well, little Ball-o'-fire, are you of gentle birth?"

"As gentle as the King," replied the boy; "and as hungry as the Prince of Wales."

"That may well be hungry enough, poor boy," replied my father. But we must feed you at all events, and clothe you too, I think.

Would you like to be page to my eldest son, little Ball-o'-fire?"

"I would rather be lackey to his younger brother," replied the boy, boldly; and Emily, looking up, fixed her eyes upon him, with a surprised and inquiring glance, while my father demanded,

"Why so, my lad?"

What the boy might have answered I do not know; but he was the most rapid catcher of a glance I ever beheld; and, after turning his eye for a single instant to my face, which was frowning pretty severely I own, he replied,

"Because I know Captain Harry best; and because I saw him send his sword through the black-hearted roundhead that shot my father at Bolton le Moors."

Something in the boy's answer made Emily's eyes fill with tears; and my father seemed struck with it also.

"Ha! those are good reasons, in truth," replied he; "and he shall make his page of thee till better times. Send for the village tailor,

Harry, and get rid of those rags of his, that he may not shame thy service."

"Those rags have not shamed the service of the King," replied the boy quickly, with a sharp and perhaps indignant tone. "Yet, nevertheless," he added, a moment after, "they are old friends that I am not loth to part with, for they are every hour threatening to deny me their good company the next."

As my father was not in general fond of such free-spoken companions, I took little Ball-o'-fire out of the room; and, after giving him strict directions in regard to his behaviour towards both my brother and Lord Masterton, I delivered him over into the hands of one of the servants, who, aided and abetted by the tailor of the neighbouring village, in a few days produced him in a page's dress, looking as handsome a boy as ever I beheld. There was an air of bold freedom and of dauntless courage in his whole demeanour, that might have become a prince; and though he strictly followed my commands, to show reverence and respect to

both my father and brother, he still retained the air of easy independence that had grown up with him from his earliest years. His activity of body and mind was astonishing. He slept little, and that at any accidental hour that he found most convenient ; but I never knew him absent when I wanted him, inattentive to my commands, forgetful of what he heard, or incompetent to execute any thing that was asked of him. Of course I need not say that I did not demand any thing very unreasonable, though sometimes to try all the manifold strange accomplishments which he had acquired in his wandering existence, I would occasionally require him to perform offices very different from those with which he might have been expected to be familiar, and yet I never found any that his skill and ingenuity did not contrive to accomplish. On all occasions he showed himself gay, and shrewd, and good-humoured, but somewhat hasty in temper ; and I would not have suffered him to wear a dagger, which he always did, had I not been aware that he had been

accustomed to the use of such an implement from his youth.

The quick movements, and the rapidity of speech and manner of the soldier's child, seemed, in some degree, to enliven the dull routine of our dwelling; but, in other respects, every thing soon appeared to sink back to the state in which it was before our unsuccessful expedition; although several circumstances contributed to render the house more gloomy than formerly. My own feelings had changed me from a gay and lively youth to a grave and rather churlish young man. My brother, too, was more by himself than ever, and my father full as much so; while every day some of the widows, or orphans, or parents, of the men who had fallen beside us in battle, would come up to the house, either for tidings of their relatives' fate, or some account of his death, or some consolation under their afflictions. It was in general Master Harry that was asked for, on these sad occasions; and such interviews did not tend to remove the gloom that had fallen over me.

Emily Langleigh, however, was all that was kind and gentle. It formed no part of my plan to shun her society, or to endeavour to forget my love by flying from its object. I strove so to conduct myself, that, towards her, the slightest shade of difference should not be apparent ; but she saw that I was sad ; and, with but too dangerous kindness, she endeavoured to win me from myself, by every endearing attention. We were almost always together. Frank was seldom if ever near ; and, indeed, when he by chance met us walking or riding, he seemed purposely to avoid joining us, so that my days passed in that commune, which did far more to nourish my affection, than all its hopelessness could do to diminish it.

Thus passed more than two months, during which time my brother's conduct remained unaltered ; reserved, silent, constantly alone, riding, shooting, walking by himself, he seemed to hold little communication with any one but his servant, Gabriel Jones. Nevertheless, if chance ever threw us together for any length of time, I found that he was gentler and kinder

in his mood towards me than formerly ; and I could not but remark that often he fixed his eyes upon me, as if there was something in his bosom that he wished to speak. Once, and only once, he spoke to me of Emily Langleigh, in terms of such high and ardent praise, that, feeling I could hear no more, I left the room. He followed me to the door, and I heard his voice pronounce my name, as I was proceeding along the passage ; but I knew that the command over myself which I had striven so powerfully and so painfully to obtain, was, for the time at least, lost : and I affected not to hear his call. I have regretted through the long course of many years that I did not pause at that moment, and listen to what he was about to say. It was but a trifle, it is true, but trifles are the pivots on which turn all the vast wheels of that complicated machine, society ; and he who has no trifles to regret, will probably find, on memory, few great errors for which to compound with remorse.

With that single exception, nothing occurred during those two months to recall to my mind

the fearful memory that Emily was to be his ; and I began to grow accustomed to my fate.

At length, one day, as I returned from sailing on my boat in the bay, I met Frank suddenly in the wood. He caught my hand the moment we met, and, fixing his dark eyes upon me, with a look that seemed destined to read my very soul, he said, " Harry, my father has just announced to me, that this day month ——"

Before he ended the sentence I knew what was to come. His gaze was upon me—his suspicions, I saw, were excited. But I nerved myself with all my strength, and by the time he had concluded—" that this day month I am to receive the hand of Emily Langleigh," I had obtained the power to reply calmly, with the single word, " Well !"

He held my hand a moment longer in his ; and his eye ran over every line in my face, till I could feel the blood beginning to rise into it, in spite of all my efforts. But at that instant he loosened his hold, and, echoing my word " Well !" turned into the wood and disappeared. He said not a word—he made not a com-

ment—but he echoed that word, *Well*, in a tone in which astonishment, and indignation, and grief had all their share.

My calmness was but of a moment. Nor could I have commanded that moment, had I not been raising up and combating the same evil spirits in my solitary sail across the bay, that my brother's communication was calculated to call forth again. I had thought of Emily Langleigh as his bride—of my own dear, beautiful Emily as the wife of my brother; and though not a word had reached my ear to indicate that the time at which that sacrifice was to be made was now approaching, a strange, indistinct, painful apprehension that such was the case, had weighed upon my mind during the whole day. While it was but apprehension, however, I had dared to meet and to steel myself against the worst. But, oh! what pure unmingled agony of spirit were my communings with myself, after the forebodings were confirmed — when I found that it was decided—that the day was named to put the inevitable barrier of fate between me and Emily for ever!

I sought out the deepest part of the wood—I cast myself down in despair—I writhed amidst the dewy grass, like a crushed worm, for nearly two long hours, and was only roused at length from the tumultuous dream of my agony, by the approach of a footstep. I started up, but not before the quick eye of my new page had fallen upon me.

“Well, boy!” I exclaimed, in somewhat of a hasty tone, “What brings you now?”

“Nothing, but to tell the news,” replied the page.

“Tell it to some one else then,” I said, “I know it well already.”

“She is a gallant sloop,” replied the boy, without appearing to take any note of the agitation which I felt must have been evident to the blindest eyes; “She is a gallant sloop, and half her cargo is by this time stowed amongst the rocks.

“What do you mean, wild lad?” I asked. “What sloop are you speaking of?”

“The smuggling French sloop that lies so well at anchor in the cove,” replied the page;

then suddenly changing his tone, and coming nearer me, he said: "How well she would carry us all to France!"

"Carry us! Whom do you mean?" I asked.
"You are mad, boy!"

"Not so mad as many!" he answered: "I mean you, and me, and one person more;" and he gazed up in my face with a glance which, translated by the feelings that were then newly awakened in my bosom, received but one interpretation.

He touched upon a dangerous subject; and, without another word, either of the questions which my heart prompted me to put, or of the rebuke that his boldness well merited, I turned, and walked towards the house. A child, a very child, had seen into my heart. Could I then dream that what I felt had escaped the keen eyes of my brother? The boy followed me as I walked on; but my own consciousness made a coward of me; and, without daring to question him farther, I bade him begone and play.

I shall never forget the meeting of our family at supper that night. What I said I

hardly know—what I felt was torture. Emily was as pale as death. In one single day the bright and beautiful colour of her cheek had faded entirely away ; and, when she smiled, or rather strove to smile, it was like one of those faint and fitful beams that sometimes struggle through a stormy day, tipping for a moment some distant cloud ; but lost again in gloom, long ere it reaches the earth. Frank was as silent as the tomb ; and our meeting was rather like that of a family after the recent loss of one of its members, than on any more joyful occasion. A stranger coming amongst us then might well have looked round to see if he could behold some vacant seat—some of those new, dark blanks in the domestic circle which—when death has lately been busy in a house, and time has not yet robbed memory of her sting—call up so many thoughts at every time of meeting.

My father saw that embarrassment at least, hung over us all ; and before he retired for the night, he told Emily that he had sent an invitation to her father's first cousin, the Lady

Margaret Langleigh, to spend the ensuing month at Masterton House. The motive and the proposal were kind and judicious. Rightly judging that under such circumstances the presence and support of an elder person of her own sex, would be of the greatest comfort to Emily; he had fixed upon one, whom none of the family had ever seen, indeed, but of whom every report was favourable.

Her husband had fallen in the civil war; his estates had been sequestered. She herself had once suffered severe imprisonment; but fame said that she had borne all with exemplary patience, fortitude, and cheerfulness; and lived in penury with the same unchangeable serenity which she had displayed in her highest fortune. To Emily's mother she had been a dear and valued friend; and in Emily herself, she had ever taken a profound and unvarying interest. I found afterwards that, in prosperity or adversity alike, she had never ceased to demand and receive news of her young cousin; and though, at that time, I had hardly ever heard of her before, she had never ceased

since the death of Lord Langleigh, to correspond with my father. Such a person was well calculated to give confidence, hope, and support, to us all; and in truth, we all seemed to need it; but had she been the exact reverse of what she was, none of Lord Masterton's family would have presumed to differ from his opinion or murmur at his will.

For the next ten nights, it seemed as if the balmy angel of sleep had forgotten me for ever. During the day a thousand eyes were upon me; but that part of existence generally devoted to sleep was my own, unwatched, unrestrained; and I lay and deluged my pillow with tears—bitter, weak, infant-like tears. But after acting all day, with the iron rigidity of a stoic, the part of calm contentment while my heart was on fire, it was a relief at night to be a very child; and to humour my grief to the overflowing. Still the want of rest, and the continual agonizing struggle in my bosom, had nearly, I believe, upset my reason. I formed, before I could conquer my own thoughts, a thousand wild schemes for carrying off

Emily Langleigh. The words which the boy had casually spoken, wandered continually through my mind ; and I more than once went down to the smuggling vessel, spoke with the skipper, and ascertained that a small sum of money would bribe him to more deeds than I should be ever tempted to require. Let me not be misunderstood. I never in my waking consciousness formed or suffered such a thought. I banished them whenever I discovered such imaginations rising up in my brain. But I felt like him of old—as if I had two spirits ; and while the better angel slept, the more watchful demon would lure me on with wild visions, towards deeds that the nobler soul condemned as soon as any thing called it from its momentary slumber.

And what made me dream that Emily would consent to fly with me ? it may be asked. I do not well know ; and yet it was a dream that haunted me. Her fading cheek, her dimmed eye, which spoke of sleepless nights too like my own, a sort of shrinking from the attentions which my brother now began to pay,

even an anxious and trembling agitation, when I was with her alone—all made me feel that her heart was not in that which was going forward, and dream that perhaps her wishes were not unallied to mine. And yet to think so, only added torture to what I felt already. It was madness—it drove me to madness—and one day, when the conviction had come more strongly upon me than ever, in a fit of wild despair, I ran hastily down the narrow and labyrinth-like path that led to the cove where the smuggler lay; and in a few minutes I had hired the sloop to be at my command for the next thirty days.

It wanted now five days of that appointed for my brother's marriage; and with a sort of gloomy determination in every step, which bordered on insanity, I trod back my way towards the house, murmuring to myself broken fragments of what I purposed to say to Emily, in communication of my love and my design. When I entered the withdrawing-room, however, I found her seated beside an old, but still beautiful woman, though her beauty was like that of a ruin, something lovely, falling fast to

decay. There were the lines of requiescent forehead, the broad high forehead, the straight fine nose, the small mouth, the rounded chin, the large blue eyes; and even the fine complexion remained. But the snowy hair braided across the brow, beneath the close wimple, and the deep marks which time and care could only furrow, spoke both of age and sorrow.

Emily had been in tears; whether at the tale Lady Margaret — for it was she — was telling, or at her own feelings, I do not know; but after her introduction to myself, she lady went on, and spoke of mine — endured, temptation so resisted, and agonies so subdued, by the chastening principle of true piety, that I felt ashamed of my own madness, and began to look to some higher source than that from which I had hitherto endeavoured to draw false strength to master the expression of my feelings.

She spoke in a gentle and a soothing tone of herself and her sorrows — in a manner which gave consolation without seeming to console; and with such topics she mingled many a

Frank, guided by long experience in the world, which told the truth as they bore evident, the stamp of the place whence they came. "Religion," she ended by saying, "was the only thing she had found on earth, which like the bee drew from the bitter and the sweet the same honied juices and though many ways had been devised for man to govern his nature she had seen but that one principle, which she could rather have borne."

Emily listened, and then lifted her eyes to mine, with a look that seemed almost voluntary. I had listened too, and turning to my own chamber, I knelt and prayed; and, cast from me at once, the unworthy design I had entertained. I was not happier, it is true, but I was braver, and I felt that I had acquired a new principle of endurance.

Still, as the date was fixed, I resolved, to detain it there, to see Emily's hand placed in that of her husband; and then without a moment's delay amidst scenes that I dared not trust my mind to dwell on, to seek in some other land, and give myself to the wild current of accident. It was a wild and rash

purpose, it is true ; but those were days in which every kind of mad scheme was so familiar to the mind, that it was nothing extraordinary.

The skipper then, remained in the cove ; his merchandise was already dispersed over the country ; and the magistrates had too much occupation, between fanatical dreams and political disturbances, to notice with energy his illicit traffic. My father, indeed, declared that after his son's marriage, he would take measures for putting a stop to the system of forbidden commerce which had established itself all along the coast during the civil war : but long before he did so, I thought I should be many far leagues away from my once-loved native land ; and, in the mean time, he was too full of his own thoughts, to give much attention to the transactions that were passing around him. He seemed not to perceive the haggard wretchedness which my countenance must have spoken too plainly. He saw not those signs on the cheek and the eye of Emily Langleigh, that told of doubt, and fear, and repugnance towards the union that was about to take place. He remarked not even in my brother, a sort of

stern but restless anxiety, which showed that his heart was not at ease.

Nevertheless Frank played the part of an attentive suitor in some degree. He was more with Emily than he had hitherto been; he spoke to her, I believe, tenderly and kindly; though I took good care seldom to be a witness to their conversations; he kept his man, Gabriel Jones, continually on the road between our dwelling and Exeter, bringing rarities and ornaments for the person of his bride; and by a thousand little acts of the same kind, he strove to cover over a degree of cold abstraction, which would too often fall upon him.

All this satisfied my father in regard to him; and doubtless, in the case of Emily, Lord Masterton attributed to native modesty and girlish fears, all those signs of reluctance which had their origin in still more powerful feelings. From me, however, none of those signs were hidden; and if I did not construe them aright, it was not for want of seeking their interpretation. All my perceptions—all my thoughts—were confined to what was passing between those two. Every thing else had become to

me merely mechanical. I may say that I saw nothing,—that I felt nothing but what they did and said; and all those rambling thoughts and fancies, which in other days used to go forth from my mind, to wander truant-like about the wide universe, unguided, unrestrained, now seemed totally annihilated. The only way in which imagination exercised her powers was, in giving a thousand varied constructions to every look and word of my brother and Emily Langleigh.

Still my father saw not, or seemed not to see that I was altogether changed. The only notice he ever took of the gloom that hung over me, was when, two days before my brother's marriage-day, he gave into my own hands the disposal of the estates which had descended to me from my mother, together with a sum of money which had been accumulated, during the last year and a half, but had not been invested, as usual, in land.

“I hope, Harry,” he said, “that you have not supposed I was going to make over to your brother a large portion of my property, without assigning to you sufficient income to

hold your rank in society. Your mother's fortune will be enough for the present ; and your late conduct has shown, that though not yet of age by law, you are quite competent by reason and intellect to manage your own estates. I have only to hope," he proceeded somewhat gravely, "that we shall see you soon resume the cheerfulness which has lately left you."

I was about to reply ; but I felt that if I did, I should say dangerous words, that could never be recalled ; and merely thanking him for the trust he had in my judgment, I left him without explanation of my feelings or insight into my heart. I avoided, as far as I could, all the miserable preparations which were made to give splendour to a ceremony that was to doom me to wretchedness for ever, by seeking almost solely the conversation of Lady Margaret Langleigh ; and in doing so, I won the regard of one who was destined to be deeply serviceable to me in after life.

Thus passed two more days of misery ; but the third I must speak of by itself.

CHAPTER II.

IT dawned at last — that day of exquisite wretchedness, which centuries of either joy or sorrow could never wear away from my remembrance, if Time were to fly over my head for ever, with all the blessings and the curses that drop continually from his shadowy wings. It dawned at last; and I quitted my bed, how changed from what I had been, when I used to welcome the bright morning light streaming unclouded into my chamber, as the harbinger of a day of joy, to the eager and hopeful mind of unblighted youth. It is an often used figure of speech to say, I rose like a criminal to execution; but in my case it was so indeed. I rose to a day on which I was to die to hope and happiness for ever;

and I prepared to meet my fate with the same calm, steadfast determination, with which a brave man encounters death itself. Like many I have heard of, who, when going to the scaffold, have dressed themselves with painful attention, I trimmed my new-grown beard with care ; I spread my long hair down my shoulders ; I chose the gayest and most splendid colours from my wardrobe ; and placed the highest plume I could find in my hat.

My page stood beside my dressing-table ; but the boy was sad and gloomy ; and of all the news with which he usually strove to divert me in the morning, he had only to tell me that “ Holy Gabriel,” as he had christened my brother’s man, “ had brought his master a letter from Exeter, which had made him right glad and happy.” I was thinking of something else ; and I took no notice of what he said, when, a moment after, my brother entered with some degree of eagerness in his countenance. “ Send away the boy, Harry !” he said ; “ I want to speak with you.” I desired the boy to go ; but, at that moment, my father entered also.

“ I am glad to see you dressed, Harry,” he exclaimed. “ Hasten down with all speed to receive Sir Charles Mostyn, who is now dismounting in the court. Keep him, and whatever guests may arrive besides, in conversation, till I come. Fie, Frank ! fie ! not prepared on your wedding-day ! Quick, quick, and dress yourself ! ”

Frank bit his lip till I thought the blood would have started forth ; and I was unfortunately obliged to descend, to receive the few guests who had been invited on the occasion. How I fulfilled the task Heaven knows ; but it certainly was as bitter a one as ever was imposed on man. Several of those who came, remarked how deadly pale I looked ; and, attributing the fact to the wounds I had received, asked kindly after my health ; but all and each tortured me with congratulations on my brother’s wedding, and praised the bride to one who too deeply felt already how beautiful and excellent she was. One had seen her here, and another there. One lauded her for this, and another admired her for that ; but the story

still ended with what a handsome couple she and Frank would make ; and none seemed to perceive that the rack and the thumb-screw would be nothing to that which they were inflicting upon me.

At length—as the ceremony was to be performed in the private chapel attached to the mansion — arrived the clergyman of the parish. He had been our tutor in our earlier years ; and soon after Frank came down, they spoke together in a whisper for two or three minutes. The worthy divine looked up in his face, with evident marks of surprise, as I heard him reply to something which the other had said, “ Certainly ! certainly ! as long as possible ! but on what excuse ? ”

“ You shall have one,” replied my brother ; and, as I passed on to another part of the room as quickly as possible, I heard no more.

My father appeared the moment after, and unbending in some degree from his usual stately coldness, he now welcomed one, and now addressed another, with a few graceful but common-place words of courtesy, and a

smile, which perhaps was little less so. "I would have been with you earlier, gentlemen," he said; "but of three swords which I hung by my side successively, I found two rusted to their sheaths. In truth it is little likely," he added, laughing, "that I should have to draw a blade again in this life, but however I did not choose to come to my son's wedding with a rusty sword by my side."

"It is strange — it is mighty strange," said an old cavalier, with an ominous shake of the head; "I fear it augurs badly for the King, my Lord. It is mighty strange—"

"And still stranger," said my father, "your spoilt dog Rupert, Harry, came fawning on me at my chamber-door, as I opened it; and in truth would scarcely let me pass. He held me by the glove so long, that unwilling to strike the beast on such a morning, I let him keep it."

"Strange indeed!" replied the old cavalier again; and though the conversation turned the moment after into another course, I could see him standing by himself in the window meditating over what had passed, and marking the

minutes by the same foreboding shake of the head.

I took little notice of any thing, however. The hour appointed for the ceremony speedily approached, and every moment came with gathered agony upon my heart ; at length one of the doors opened, and the whisper of “ The Bride ! The Bride ! ” ran through the guests. I just caught a glimpse of Emily as she entered the room, accompanied by a group of ladies who had collected in her chamber. She was still as beautiful as light ; but all the decorations of her bridal array could not conceal that she was as pale as ashes ; and it was evident that if she had not leaned upon the arm of another, she must have fallen, so weak and tottering were her steps. She raised her eyes for a moment, and a quick sharp blush rushed over her face, while, as if by instinct, her glance first met mine amidst all those that surrounded her. I could bear the throbbing of my heart no longer ; and turning away sick, sick as death, I walked on into the narrow passage that led towards the chapel. It was a sort of corridor, that went on for some way, with windows on

one side, but no door in its whole length till it came to a private one communicating with my father's bedchamber. Beyond that again it opened into a little vestibule, from whence a broad flight of steps descended to the western door of the chapel, which had besides two other entrances to the north and south, and a small door under those very stairs, communicating with the lower part of the house.

I paused near the door of my father's chamber, and strove successfully to call up new courage, to go on through the bitter day as I had determined. I know not well how, but it seemed as if the very intensity of the agony I suffered, gave me new powers of endurance to bear it all to the very close. I felt that it could not last long—that the moment for which I had been summoning all my fortitude had now arrived ; and a few moments' thought restored me to calmness—though it was the calmness of despair. After pausing a minute by the door, I heard voices within, although I had left my father with the rest in the withdrawing-room ; but concluding the speakers to be servants, when I found the bridal party were approaching to-

wards the chapel, I endeavoured to open the door, in order to let the first persons go by, and then join those that followed. The key, however, had been turned on the other side; the lock resisted my efforts, and I was obliged to pass my father, as he led on poor Emily, who could not indeed have followed his steps, had not Lady Margaret held her other arm. She did not raise her eyes, but whether she was conscious of my presence or not, I could see her tremble like the aspen as she came near the place where I stood. In scarcely a better frame myself, I joined those that followed, and we entered the chapel; but just as Emily set her foot upon the altar steps, I beheld a sort of wavering sinking of her whole figure, and the next moment she fell back fainting into my father's arms. She soon recovered, and opening her eyes, looked round her with a glance, in which, if ever I beheld despair, it was there.

At that moment, however, Frank, in a low and hurried voice, proposed that, as she seemed so ill, the ceremony should be postponed for a short time.

“ No, no !” replied my father, “ she is better now ! Are you not, my child ? She will not be well, till the ceremony is over.”

His word was law, and the whole party were now arranged round the altar ; but the book of prayer was not to be found. It was sought for, through the chapel, in vain ; but after a time, another was procured, and the service was begun. The clergyman read slowly ; and he marked every word of the service with a painful distinctness, as if he purposely sought to wring my heart. If I might judge, too, from the countenance of my brother, his feelings during those solemn sentences were by no means sweet ; for every other minute, his eyes wandered fearfully round the building, as if his mind were anywhere but in the vows he was about to take. At length, after having read and paused upon every word of the preceding exhortations with a solemnity and a slowness which seemed to me, at least unnecessary, the clergyman proceeded to ask that question, the reply to which seals the most solemn contract which can bind human beings together ; but at

that moment some steps were heard running down the stairs by which we had entered. My brother paused, and my little page—for it was he that came in so unceremoniously—whispered to me something about “armed men.”

My father heard both the irreverent step with which the boy entered the chapel, and the half whisper in which he addressed me; and turning round, he looked angrily towards me, as if to command silence; but my brother, without replying to the question of the clergyman, anxiously pointed to the boy, exclaiming “What does he say? what does he say? Speak, boy! What news bring you? What were you saying?”

“I say,” replied the boy boldly, “that the corridor is full of armed men, and they are round the chapel too! There! there! Don’t you see their steel caps above the window sills? Look! Here they come!”

Almost every one started at such tidings, and instinctively turned their eyes towards the casements and doors of the chapel; though one or two of the younger cavaliers present recovered

themselves quickly, and assuming an air of unconcern, hummed a few notes of some blustering air, as the readiest way of covering the temporary surprise into which they had been thrown, and which they considered all unworthy of their warlike nature. The old gentleman alone, who had seemed to draw such evil auguries from my father's anecdotes of the rusty sword, now appeared perfectly prepared for whatever might occur; and, drawing on his right-hand glove, he hitched his belt a little forward from the left side, so as to bring his hilt round towards his grasp, almost at the first words the page uttered.

As the boy ended, the southern door of the chapel burst open; and Habaccuc Grimstone, the Exeter magistrate, accompanied by an officer apparently of some rank, and followed by about twenty musketeers, made his appearance. The clergyman shut the book, and an expression of surprise, but certainly not of displeasure, came over the countenance of my brother. Emily clasped her hands, and turned towards me; and in a moment all was confusion.

The Parliamentary officer advanced straight towards us; and, to my astonishment, I beheld, as he came nearer, the countenance of Walter Dixon.

“Major General Dixon,” cried the Exeter magistrate, who hung a little behind, with the air of a bully at a bear-baiting, cheering on his dog, and quite ready to stave and tail, as it is called, but not at all willing to come within the grasp of master bruin himself, “I charge you execute your duty towards these prelatie malignants, who cast from them the bread of life, and like dogs return to their vomit. On! godly Jacob Wilson, and saintly Flee-from-the-wrath-to-come Bilkins! On! and second your commander!”

Walter Dixon advanced till he was within about two steps of the altar; and then, unrolling a paper he held in his hand, he read, “Master Francis Masterton, commonly called Colonel Masterton, a malignant lately in arms in the county of Kent!”

As he spoke, the two first soldiers who had followed him, laid hands upon my brother, with a degree of violence sufficient—although

he offered not the slightest resistance—to tear open his vest ; and I saw resting on his bosom the picture of a woman—it was not that of Emily Langleigh.

All this had passed in a moment—almost before any one was aware. My brother, as I have said, made not the slightest opposition to the arrest, nor appeared in any degree to resent the rough treatment of those who seized him. Such things indeed were common in those days, and Walter Dixon proceeded as a matter of course, after his fellows had secured the first upon his list, to read the names of those next to be taken ; but my father now drew his sword, and the blades of all the gentlemen present sprang from their sheaths.

“ What is the meaning of all this ? ” exclaimed Lord Masterton. “ Gentlemen, this must be resisted ! I am superior to any magistrate that I see present ; and I will not have my hearth invaded by every Jack who chooses to cant at Exeter. Ring the bell, boy ; and we shall soon have bills and blades enough to show these gentlemen another tale.”

In the same instant the terrified women were

hurried behind us, and little Ball-o'-fire, catching the bell rope, rang out such a peal, that hill and dale echoed it for miles around ; while facing the door with our swords in our hands, we opposed ten gentlemen, with four or five servants, to the musketeers who were crowding in by the way which had first given them admittance.

“ Advance the file above, Matthew Hutchinson !” shouted Walter Dixon ; “ down with your muskets !” and in a moment the top of the staircase, at the other end of the chapel, was crowded with musketeers, while at their head appeared Gabriel Jones, or rather Hutchinson, as he was now called ; and at the first word of their commander, their arms, with the matches lighted, were brought to bear upon our little group below.

“ Lord Masterton, it is in vain to resist !” exclaimed General Dixon. “ I have orders, here in my hand, from the Council of State, whose authority you dare not deny, to arrest every member of the present party, I believe, except some of the lackeys. Will you surrender ?”

My father paused, and turned his eye from the formidable array of muskets that in some degree surrounded us, to the group of trembling women behind him; but his suspense was soon brought to an end by the old cavalier I have before mentioned, towards whose bosom one of the soldiers had advanced, somewhat too near, the muzzle of his piece.

“Surrender!” exclaimed the old man, “Never, ye cuckoldy scum!” and putting aside the musket with his left hand, he struck the man vehemently with the hilt of his sword.

“Fire!” cried the voice of Gabriel Jones from above, in a thundering tone, such as I had never before heard issue from his hypocritical lips. “Fire!” and at the same instant the sound of a volley, and a wild scream from the terrified ladies of our party, shook the roof of the building. One of the soldiers who held my brother was in the line of fire of the troops above, and he fell by the shot of his comrades.

At the same moment, before I was well prepared to act, I felt my father catch my arm. Thinking he did so to withhold me from any

rashness, I turned towards him. He was ghastly pale—there was a fearful want of meaning in his eye; and for a moment or two I gazed at him in surprise, for he stood firm upon his feet—but the next minute he reeled; and—after raising his hand twice to his head—he fell dead at my feet without a word or groan to speak the passing of the soul from earth.

There was no time for woe. All was now strife and confusion. The musketeers broke their ranks in pouring down the stairs, and in at the door. The Cavaliers mingled with them; and clashing swords, detached shots, screams and groans, echoed through the walls dedicated to the God of Peace. It was evident, however, that our efforts were vain, for the superior numbers of the Roundheads put serious resistance out of the question. My brother was already in their hands; two or three of our guests and servants had fallen; two or three more by this time had been hurried through the door as prisoners; and my only hope was to force my way through, and to save Emily Langleigh from the fate which

threatened us all. While five or six of the gentlemen present were striving with one party of the soldiers, I sprang upon the musketeer opposite to me; and, after a moment's struggle, wrenched his piece from his hands, and dashed him to the ground with the butt-end. His right-hand man fired at my head, but missed me; for almost at the same moment that he pulled the trigger, the dagger of little Ball-o'-fire was in his throat.

“Follow! follow! quick!” cried the boy, whose presence of mind never deserted him, springing towards me while he spoke, and pointing towards the stairs by which he had lately entered, “Catch up the lady! The way under the stairs is clear.”

What he said was true. The chapel was full of smoke, which, carried slowly upwards, rolled in thin clouds of blueish white above our heads: but by the open door under the stair-case, I could see through a number of vaulted rooms beyond, on the long perspective of whose floors the calm light of a September morning was sleeping peacefully. A quick glance around

showed me Emily clinging to the altar, before which the good clergyman had cast himself down in prostrate terror. All form or ceremony, under our present circumstances, was of course out of the question. A moment's delay would have snatched from us our only chance of escape; and throwing my arm round her, I caught her up, and hurried across the chapel. A soldier instantly started across my path to stay me; but that daring boy again came to my aid, and stooping down, plunged his knife into the tendons of his leg. The man fell headlong, with his steel cap ringing against the stones of the pavement; and Emily beseeched me, at the same moment, to loose my hold of her.

“I but embarrass you, dear Henry,” she cried — “I but embarrass you. I am strong enough to fly, if you will lead me. I am terrified, but not overcome. I can fly, indeed!”

I did as she bade me; — all passed as quick as the lightning. The boy was already through the door; and we were crossing the threshold,

when Gabriel Jones marked us as we passed ; and darting forward with a look of triumph, and hatred, and mockery, mingling in a sneer that would have done honour to the countenance of a fiend, he seized Emily by the arm.

“ Stay, stay ! my pretty mistress,” he cried, “ not so fast ! You must wed a better —”

Those words were the last he ever spoke. The musket I had wrenched from the soldier was still in my right hand ; the match was yet lighted ; and leaving my hold of Emily, I turned upon him, brought the muzzle within an inch of his head, fired ;— and, springing up nearly three feet in the air, he fell lifeless, with a cry something between a groan and a scream, too fearful even for memory to dwell upon unnecessarily. Again, I drew Emily forward, closed the door, locked and double-locked it, and, catching her once more in my arms, bore her rapidly through all the well-known passages of the house.

“ Where are you going ?” cried the boy, as he saw me opening the door of the library.

“ There is no other door !— they will soon find you there ! ”

But I hurried on, locked the door behind me ; and, after a moment's search, found one of the bookcases which, as I well knew, moved upon its centre, in the manner of a door. I threw it open, and we all passed ; but just as I was closing it behind me, I heard the voice of Walter Dixon, shouting at the end of the far passage—

“ Where is Hutchinson, now ? Send him hither, quick ! They have escaped by the secret passage he spoke of :—bid him show me where it is.”

I thanked Heaven that I had so effectually silenced the miscreant who had betrayed us ; and shutting the door, I barred and bolted it with all the means which seemed to be left there for the purpose. Knowing, however, that our farther flight might soon be stopped, by placing sentries round the house, I beseeched Emily to hasten after me, down the small staircase that opened before us.

“ As quickly as I can, Harry,” she replied ;

“ but I am rather faint with all I have gone through. Still, go on ; I will follow you to the last.”

This private way into the woods had been shown me by my father in former days ; and though—as the library was his peculiar room, on which no one was permitted to trespass—I was not very familiar with all the particulars, yet I knew that the door which gave exit from it was surrounded by the thickest part of the forest ; and once there, I calculated surely on setting all pursuers at defiance.

We reached the bottom of the staircase ; and, unlocking the little postern door, which opened in the angle of one of the buttresses, issued out into the wood. We were at that moment not twenty yards from the chapel ; but the strife seemed over now ; and all that we could hear through the open windows was several people talking within, interrupted every now and then by a deep groan, or the clang of a musket grounded on the stone pavement of the building. I felt Emily tremble as she leaned on me ; and putting my finger to my lip, to enjoin

silence, I again raised her in my arms, and carried her as fast as I could through the windings of the forest paths. In this manner we reached the top of the cliff, which commanded the cove where the sloop lay. My intention was immediately to set sail for France, and put the wide ocean between us and pursuit; but what was my surprise, on reaching the point from which I had a view over the whole bay, to behold the smuggler standing out to sea!

Immediate security however was the great object, and carrying the dear girl I held to my heart, down the face of the crag, by the zig-zag path which led to the shore, I turned across the bank of loose stones, about half way down, and pushing through some straggling bushes, that had rooted themselves on the rock, entered one of the caves with which I was familiar. I then bade the boy mark well the cave, and, by running down to the shore, ascertain whether the smugglers had left any boat behind, or whether the way to my own boat was clear.

In an instant he sprang down the steepest

part of the cliff, and Emily and I were left alone. The tumult of strange mingled feelings that came through my bosom at that moment, is impossible to describe. I had seen my home deluged in blood—I had seen my brother carried away a prisoner—I had seen my father fall dead by my side; and yet—strange human nature!—the predominant emotion of my heart, was joy at beholding Emily Langleigh standing there by me, rescued from the perils of that fearful morning, and free from a union that was worse than death. I make it as a confession, as a painful confession. Amongst all the many causes I had for sorrow, my first feeling was gratulation!—selfish gratulation!

“Emily, you are safe!” I cried as I placed her within the cave. “No one will find us here!”

“Thank God!” she said, “thank God! and next to God, I must thank you, dear Henry,” and as she looked at me, the tears started up in her eyes. I felt that there was no cause for longer resisting my own feelings; the picture of Lady Eleanor Fleming that I had seen hang-

ing round my brother's neck set me free,—the long repressed deep feelings which had a thousand times before risen to my lips, now broke forth in the expansive gladness of our deliverance. Had the empire of the world—had my fate here and hereafter depended upon my silence, I could not have refrained; and throwing my arms round her I loved, I poured forth the passionate tale of my deep affection in words of fire. I mingled it strangely and wildly with all the recollections of that sad morning; but those very recollections—the dangers from which I had saved her—the agonies I had myself undergone—the uncertainty of the fate before—the darkness of the scenes we had left behind—all gave a power, and a fervour, and a vehemence to the expression of that long, long silent passion, which swept away the common idle forms of life, like straws before a hurricane. She strove not to unclasp the arms that held her—she withdrew not her cheek from the kisses I printed on it—she spoke not a word, but I felt that she loved me, as I loved her; and my heart was satisfied. Her face was bent

down, now as crimson as a rose, and her eyes were pressed upon my shoulder, deluging my bosom with tears; but they were drops of agitation, not of sorrow, and I knew for the first time the overpowering joy of being loved. A few minutes calmed her, and gently disengaging herself, she asked, “Why, dear Harry, why did you not tell me this before? Oh! had I known it, I would sooner have died than consent to the sacrifice I had so nearly made this morning. Why, why did you not speak?”

“Because, dearest Emily,” I answered, “my father had pledged his word to yours, to wed you to his eldest son; and because I knew that he would sooner discard us all for ever, than see that promise broken; because, dear girl, I would not become the rival of my own brother, so long as I thought that in any degree his heart went along with the vows he was about to pledge; but now, Emily, I am convinced that it did not.”

“And so am I, Harry!” she replied, “and so have I been long. He never, never loved me; but now I am convinced he loves another. Did

you see that picture?" she asked, for even in the scenes of terror we had just gone through, such a circumstance could not escape the eye of a woman. "Did you see that picture? No, no! he never loved me; and loving another, he was going to marry me! But yet I must not blame him, for was not I about to do the same? Still it was different, for I did not—I would not—know what I then felt. Women, indeed, have a power of feeling very miserable, without striving to discover all the reasons why. I knew that I was wretched, Harry—I knew that I was dooming myself to wretchedness for ever; but I did not know that I—that I, too, loved another. And yet," she continued, drawing a step back, "ought I even now to say so? Am I not nearly your brother's wife—too nearly to retract, Henry? Besides, remember the promise I made your father; and promises to the dead ought, if any thing, to be more sacred than promises to the living. Oh, Henry! let us not indulge in dreaming of what is wrong. You have always been a brother to me—a dear, kind

brother, and you shall be a brother to me still ; and I will love you as a sister."

Such a sudden change of thought—a change, too, so blighting to all my hopes, was not to be listened to without remonstrance ; and I was endeavouring to prove to Emily—though God knows the ultimate fate of all was most uncertain—that she was in no degree bound to my brother by any tie, moral or religious. The passion which animated me had been so long familiar to my mind—so all-engrossing, so consuming, that now it was spoken—now it was once breathed beyond the dark sanctuary of my own bosom, it flashed with the impetuosity of the lightning to its object, careless of all that intervened. I remembered past griefs and future prospects alone, as they favoured or opposed the love that was thrilling at my heart, and I forgot entirely the dangers that still surrounded us, while I urged with uncontrollable ardour a thousand arguments in opposition to the scruples which had suddenly seized her. I had convinced her, indeed, that the promise

which my father had, I found, drawn from her to wed my brother, could only be effective so long as Frank was desirous that it should be so ; and I was proceeding to argue that his evident attachment to another person, set her free from the engagement, when loud shouts of pursuit upon the hill above us, called our minds forcibly from the first outbreking of those passionate feelings, which had so long been painfully imprisoned in our hearts, to the consideration of the peril in which we still stood. As the shouts and cries came nearer and nearer, Emily crept close to my side, and clung to me with a dear twining fold, that made my heart throb with happiness.

“ Fear not, dear girl !” I whispered, “ fear not ! a single arm could defend the mouth of this cave against a host.”

“ O may it never be tried !” replied she, in the same low tone ; and at that moment the voices sounded so close, that I could not doubt the Parliamentarians had traced us, at least as far as the top of the cliff in which the cave was hollowed. It seemed strange to me, that they

should have so soon discovered our path, through the midst of a perplexed wood, in which a thousand ways crossed and recrossed each other in every different direction; and I could not but conclude that they must have found some means of tracking me, of which I was not aware, as I heard their voices following without deviation every turn I had taken in my flight from the house. Leaning a little forward, I listened; and it all became plain in a moment.

“Hie on! hie on, Ranger!” cried one voice. Hark forward! hark forward!” shouted another. “What at fault! Try back again, Ranger!” said the first. “He does not answer to the name of Ranger,” observed a third. “The old forester said his name was Rupert.”

It was indeed my favourite and faithful dog Rupert, which the villains had set upon my track. The poor beast would have discovered me anywhere. If I lost him in the deepest forest, or the most frequented thoroughfare, he would not miss a step of the way till he rejoined me; and now, it was clear that he was tracing my path before my pursuers, and even by the impulse of

fond affection, dooming his master to imprisonment and death.

What was to be done? There was no earthly means of staying his progress, or repelling him from the cave. If taken, death would probably be my fate for the resistance I had offered, in common with others, and for the blood which had been consequently spilt. And then what would become of Emily? the dear beloved girl, who, in the simplicity of young and innocent love, had just dizzied my very brain with the happiness of acknowledged affection? What would become of her, in the hands of a set of brutal villains, who, nine times out of ten, affected superior sanctity but as the hypocritical cloak of foul and unruly passions.

I heard the feet of one of the soldiers, rushing down the last turn of the zig-zag that led near the mouth of the cave, and the eagerness of the dog, as its peculiar instinct taught it that it was nearing its master. I looked at Emily; and I contemplated, as the only resource, to hurl the animal over the edge, the moment it approached, as if it had fallen from the narrow

ledge, along which it must run to reach the cave. But then it was a terrible task, to slay the poor dog for its very affection, and my mind was still undecided when it turned towards the cave. One soldier alone seemed to keep near the dog, for the path was too steep and rugged to be trod rapidly by any but bold and daring climbers; and even he was only just in time to mark the place where it turned off from the beaten track, and crossed the bushes.

“ Here ! here ! ” he cried, pausing upon the scanty space afforded by a giddy shelf of rock, and shouting to his companions above. “ Hola ! here ! ” and as he cried, the dog ran into the cave, and sprang fondling upon me. “ Hola ! hola ! Come on ! come on ! They are here ! ” cried the soldier.

It was all over ! We were discovered !—— but at that very moment there was the ringing sound of a gunshot from below ; and while Emily with instinctive judgment caught up the spaniel in her arms, and stilled its joy at finding us, in the deepest part of the cave, I sprang forward just sufficiently to see through the

brushwood. The roundheaded fanatic was within two steps: but the shot we had heard had silenced him for ever; and after reeling for a moment drunkenly on the edge, without power to utter a word, he fell headlong down the rock to the beach below. Directly after, three of his comrades followed along the path, shouting imprecations against the slayer of the first. They paused on the same ledge where he had stood the moment before—looked down—and oh! what an instant of dreadful suspense it was while they stood there, as if in doubt. There are some minutes that feel like a lifetime, and that was one, but it was but a minute after all; for Walter Dixon, who was one of the three, almost immediately pointed downward with his hand, exclaiming, “There! there! Quick! and we shall have them yet,” and dashing onward down the open path, they were immediately lost to my sight in the turnings which the road necessarily took in descending the steep face of the crag.

I breathed at ease; but I still both listened and gazed; and, in a minute after, I saw my

own little skiff put out to sea from below the cliff, with two persons on board, and, under all the sail she could carry, steer direct for the sloop that was standing off and on, in the bay.

Whoever were the persons in the boat, one of them was evidently mistaken by the fanatics for myself, and their pursuit was over when the boat got out to sea. A minute or two after, another soldier came down from above; and, after a short interval, the four returned, bearing up amongst them the body of the man who had been shot from the beach. They passed again within ten yards of the mouth of the cave, and I could hear the trail of the dead man's feet, as they half drew, half carried him, up the steep. Their steps receded however, were lost, and once more, in the joy of security, I clasped Emily to my heart.

We were now indeed safe for the time; but caution and patience were wanted still to effect our ultimate escape. If, as I believed, the two persons I had seen in the boat were my little Ball-o'-fire and some of the boatmen he had accidentally met with, beyond doubt they would

return to seek us ; but equally beyond doubt they would not return till night. All that we could do then was to remain calmly where we were ; and seating ourselves in the farthest part of the cave, we talked long and earnestly over all that had passed, and all that was to come.

In truth it was as strange a sight to see, as ever man beheld, so lovely a creature as Emily Langleigh, dressed in all the splendour of her bridal attire, sitting on the damp ground of a cold dim cave, and weeping over all the dreadful scenes of her marriage day.

As the hurry and the tumult passed from my brain, and the first selfish gratulation on my own and her security, gave way to other memories, in good faith I could have wept too ; but weeping was in vain, and the important consideration of our future fate pressed momentarily upon us. We were both calmer. The interruption which had taken place in our conversation, and the moments of anxiety and danger that had intervened since our mutual feelings had first found utterance, seemed to have familiarized us with the theme. It ap-

peared as if several days had passed instead of minutes, and I spoke of all my wishes and all my hopes, not coolly indeed, for that I never could do, but without that wild and impetuous confusion which had attended the first outburst of the passion which had before cost me so many daily struggles to suppress. Emily was all that was gentle, and kind, and affectionate. She had owned her love, and there was nothing more to be owned. But still in regard to the promise she had made, I found her firmer than I expected—firmer than I wished. That promise, she said, my brother's conduct and her own feelings justified her so far in violating, that she would never wed a man who did not love her, and while she loved another. But still, she said, she would never give her hand to any one, till Frank had himself freed her from that promise. She feared not, she said, to write to him, or to tell him all her feelings, if she ever met him again ; and she doubted not, that both for his own sake and hers, he would at once set her at liberty ; but, till that time, she would hold herself bound as if by a vow.

I reasoned, I argued in vain; and at length, when I pointed out that she must travel far with no other protection than mine, when I spoke of the injury her fair name might sustain by such a circumstance, she laid her hand confidently in mine.

“ I do not fear, in the least, Harry,” she said; “ there are but two beings in the world to whom I could be held in any degree responsible, your brother and yourself. As my resolution is fixed, never to give him my hand, (nor does he desire it,) he cannot complain; and surely when you are the witness, the guide, and the guardian of all my steps, you too must be satisfied. As for doubting you, Harry, or for dreaming that I should ever have cause to draw one sigh for your conduct towards me, when my whole reliance, and hope, and confidence are in you, I do not believe that you would form a thought to the injury of Emily Langleigh, for all that the whole earth could give.”

She knew nothing of mankind in general, or of any world but the pure world of her own

thoughts; and I felt that I could not tell her of half of its baseness, without wounding her feelings, and lowering myself. Determined, therefore, to act as she wished, and be to her as a brother, till I could gain from Frank the renunciation which I doubted not he would willingly give, I ceased to oppose her farther. We now waited impatiently for the coming on of night; and though I twice ventured a few steps amongst the copsewood, to see if I could perceive any person in the vicinity, I did not go near the open path till the stars began to look out through the clear blue sky.

CHAPTER III.

THE night came on calm and clear ; and the star Jupiter, with his soft sweet light, shone more and more distinct every minute in the opposite sky. Every bosom, I believe, has its own peculiar sort of superstition ; and, in spite of reason, I have always connected in my own mind that star with my fate. When it has looked dim and dull, I have tried not to feel depressed ; and when, as that night, it has shone bright and clear, I have always drawn hope and consolation from its aspect. It looked out for some time quite alone in the sky, which remained full of the radiance of day long after the sun had set ; but at length, one after another, the fixed stars began to appear ; and the blue robe of

heaven was all gemmed with shining light. Running my eye, from time to time, over the darkening bosom of the sea, I strove to discover whether any boat came off from the sloop, which lay a dim black mass about three miles from shore. None, however, appeared; and, after waiting some time, I left Emily, holding poor Rupert in the cave; and, promising not to go far, ventured out to see what was passing around.

Pausing and listening every now and then, as I advanced, I came down within about twenty yards of the sea-shore; but the tide was flowing in, with rather a full swell; and I could see nothing, but one dark mass of waters, as, partially relieved by the white foam, it came rolling in dim waves, one billow over the other. A moment after, however, I thought I heard voices borne along with the roar of the waters. After a time they became more and more distinct; and I could see a boat heaving up over the waves not far from the shore, and making for the cove where the smuggler had landed his goods. As there might still be a doubt, I drew cautiously

back to the cave, to which place my little messenger was sure to direct his steps ; and, as I ascended the path, I heard the rush of the boat into the cove, the unshipping of the oars, and the landing of the men.

Worn out by fatigue and agitation, Emily was asleep when I returned ; and her fair beautiful face, which looked like that of some lovely statue, had fallen down upon the silky black spaniel that lay sleeping also, on the little ledge where the dear girl had rested her arm. In the dim light of the cave, she looked as if she were dead ; and as my mind turned to the events of the morning, when a thousand chances of death had surrounded her, a cold shudder came over me, at the memory of what had passed, and the risk that she had run. The ideas thus called up, were any thing but agreeable ; and yet I could not wake her. There was a sort of fascination in those contemplations, sad as they were, that I could not conquer ; and I stood and let my mind range on into time.

“ If she become mine,” I thought, “ and fate

should destine me to survive her, even thus, sometime or another, must I contemplate her, lying in death, when a thousand endearing memories, accumulated during life, have attached her still more to my heart. Thus must I gaze upon that fair pure brow for the last time, ere I consign it to the earth. Now, the lightest touch will wake her into being and animation, and brightness and love ; but when that day comes, the fondest kiss from her husband's lips will fail to call her into recollection. I must then gaze without any hope, but that which comes from beyond the grave."

Oh, it is a sad and solemn thing to look upon one that we love dearly, in so deep and still a sleep ! There is an awful something in it beyond repose. The strange mystery of sleep itself, that extraordinary suspension of the soul's commune with external things, that temporary extinction of being, so like death itself,—an extinction which would render death too fearful in the contemplation, if we did not escape from it in the hope of immortality,—is not alone that which makes the sight nearly allied

to pain. It is not the picture of our own death we see, so much as that of the beloved. It is the prophetic spirit within, speaking of ties to be broken, and of hopes to fail, and of affections to wither, while a thousand cherished memories twine funeral flowers to decorate the bier of the future. The only thing whose slumber does not seem to speak of death is an infant.

As I was still gazing, I felt some one pull my sleeve behind; and turning, beheld little Ball-o'-fire, who had glided in perfectly unperceived.

"The boat is here," he whispered, "and the people ready to obey your commands."

"What made the sloop get out into the bay?" I asked, in the same tone. "Its absence had nearly lost our lives."

My voice instantly woke Emily from her slumber; and starting up, she gazed wildly at the boy for a moment; but his presence explained itself; and he proceeded to answer my question by informing me that the smugglers had been alarmed by the passage of soldiers through the country that morning; and, fearing

that they were betrayed or discovered, had put to sea, leaving a man on a hill near Masterton House, to make a signal when the troops were gone.

Notwithstanding all the news which the boy brought to them, and his desire that they should return and deliver us even by force, they could not be persuaded even to send a boat on shore, till that signal was made. It was to be a fire lighted on the hill where the man was posted; and about ten minutes before the boat left the ship, the beacon had been kindled; in consequence of which, the captain of the sloop had not only sent a boat well manned on shore; but had also determined on bringing his vessel again into the neighbourhood of the cove.

This information changed all our plans. If the soldiers had indeed left Masterton House, I determined immediately to return thither myself; and ascertain more clearly the whole events of that unfortunate day; but Emily, who had heard the whole of the boy's account, entreated that at least I would not venture thither till I had taken means to assure myself that the

house was clear. In my little page, however, I had a ready messenger ; and he at once undertook to go and gain all tidings from the man who had been left to watch upon the hill.

To the praises which I bestowed upon him for his courage and his conduct, he turned almost an inattentive ear ; and only asked in return :

“ Was not that a neat shot at two hundred yards, which tumbled the robustious Roundhead over the cliff ? I found your long gun loaded in the boat-house ; and once I thought of shooting the dog, as I saw it leading them down the bank ; but then, when I perceived that to bring down the Parliamentary would do just as well, I whizzed him the bullet just under the bandoleer, and sailed away with old Tom the boatman for the sloop. I made myself as big as I could ; and folded my arms, and cocked my hat, that the fools might take me for you ; and so I believe they did, for with a fair wind, we were half a mile from shore, before they got down to the beach.”

Such was the habit of danger and bloodshed in which the lad had been brought up, that his

own life, or that of a fellow being, seemed to him a matter of very little import; and such were the inveterate prejudices he had acquired by living from his birth alone with one party, that he spoke on all occasions of the slaying of one of the Parliamentary partizans, but as the death of some noxious animal.

While he started away up the hill, I proceeded to speak with the smugglers at the cove; and found them perfectly ready to obey my commands in every thing, provided they were paid for it. The means of satisfying them, fortunately I possessed; for on the morning of that very day—with the intention of quitting England for ever, as soon as Emily Langleigh was the wife of another—I had loaded my purse with all the money which my father had placed at my disposal two days before. Part was in bills on Goldsmiths in London; but near two hundred pounds was in gold; and a few pieces, as an earnest of future payment, made the smugglers my men for ever. I now stationed two above the ledge that led to the cave, and two below; and procuring from them the means of arming myself more completely, for

hitherto I had possessed nothing but my sword, I waited for the return of little Ball-o'-fire, to set out myself with three of the sailors, to ascertain the events which had taken place after I quitted the chapel.

The boy was not long in coming — for his activity was most extraordinary ; and in the short time he had been absent, he had gathered more intelligence than a common scout would have brought in a day. The man on the hill, he said, had seen no body of people ride from the house, till nearly sunset. An occasional horseman, indeed, had come and gone ; but it was not till late that he saw the whole troop, as it appeared to him, quit the place, carrying with them a number of prisoners. This was the sum of *his* news ; but, after quitting him, the boy had made his way to the house, where he had seen through the wood a sentry at the front door. Proceeding thence to the back of the house, he had climbed unperceived to the windows of each of the rooms in the lower story, and declared that only one, besides the servants' offices, was tenanted. In that, he had seen two of the

fanatics carousing after their day's exploits. Neither of them, however, belonged to the order of military saints; and, from all that he saw, he judged the house but slightly guarded.

Such news immediately determined my movements, although Emily, I saw, would fain have had me abandon my intention. She did not oppose me, indeed; but she clasped her hands with a look of mingled fear and resignation, which had almost turned me from my purpose.

At the mouth of the cave, I left little Ball-o'-fire, as the best guard that I could assign her, and set out upon an expedition, of some of whose events I own I am heartily ashamed. I must plead, however, beforehand, that no man was ever placed in a situation more fitted to excite violent and angry passions in his breast, than that in which I stood.

Approaching quietly through the woods, followed by the three well-armed sailors from the smuggler, I soon came in sight of the man who was placed to keep guard at the door, and at the first glance perceived that nothing military could possibly form any part of his real profes-

sion. Little precaution was necessary to surprise him. We were upon him in a moment: the firelock was snatched from his hands; and silence being enforced, by a pistol held to his head, he stood gaping in terror and astonishment. We now tied him hand and foot, with some ropes that had been brought from the boat; and ascending the steps, I pushed open the door, and entered the great hall.

I never remember to have seen it before without finding some of the retainers of the family ready to answer a summons, or to welcome a guest; but now it was totally vacant, and the dim lamp, whose feeble rays twinkled along the rusty suits of armour, and the branching trophies of our forest sport, looked like the last poor heir of a decaying family, endeavouring to increase his own faint lustre by reflection from the proud memories of ages past.

The room where the boy had represented the two fanatics as carousing was at the other extreme of the house; but it was not thither that I turned my steps in the first place. Leaving one of my new followers to guard the door, I

proceeded with a hasty pace towards the chapel. There was a light burning within ; and I listened at the door, as it stood ajar, but there was no sound, and I entered.

Oh, what a sight it was ! Some one had lighted the great lamp in the middle ; and its beams, spreading all through the place, fell upon a thousand objects, such as seldom, I believe, have been mingled in one spot. In twenty places, the fine oak carving and gilded rail-work were torn and perforated with musket-balls. The marble pavement was soiled with struggling feet, and stained with gore. Two dead bodies were stretched at length on the benches where we usually sat when service was there performed ; while from pillar to pillar hung the garlands of late flowers, which had been collected at great expense for Emily's marriage-day ; and trampled and bloody on the pavement lay a multitude of the same frail blossoms which had been strewed upon her path that morning. A hat and plume lay here ; a cloak was cast down there ; and, as I advanced through the aisle, I kicked a rapier from

my way, and set my foot upon a discharged pistol. The whole place remained as the fray had left it ; and the only sign of care, or even of decency, that was visible, appeared in the arrangement of those who had fallen, whose limbs had been composed, and whose bodies had been removed from the exact place where they had died, and were now laid out in different parts of the chapel.

With an aching heart, and a shuddering frame, I advanced amongst the dead, towards two bodies that were stretched upon the steps of the altar. The one—every fibre of my whole frame told me, long before I was near it, was that of my father ; and, beside it, the indecent villains had placed the traitorous, detestable slave who had betrayed us all. Good God ! — the canting fanatic—the low, base, abhorred carcase of the hypocritical menial, whose whole life had been a lie, and who died in the midst of his own treachery, to lie beside the upright, the noble, the inflexible lord, to whose death he was accessory !

It was too much for human nature to bear ;

and striding up to the altar, I spurned the body down the steps with my heel, as if it had been the carcase of a dog. As I did so, a voice near me said : — “ Forbear ! — Henry Masterton, forbear ! ”

I am but little a believer in spectres, notwithstanding the arguments of our good friend Glanville ; but, I acknowledge, I started with some feelings of awe at those words, pronounced so suddenly beside me, at such an hour, and in such a place. But the matter was explained in a moment ; for, on turning round, I saw that the door which led into the wood was open, and in the dark portal, over which the branches of the old forest-trees cast a deeper gloom than night itself, I beheld Lady Margaret Langleigh.

“ Forbear, my dear young gentleman, forbear ! ” she said. “ The offences of that clay are over ; the offences of the spirit which inhabited it, are judged by the only Just One.”

I felt ashamed that any one had seen the unworthy act of hatred I had committed ; and hastily demanded how she had escaped from the horrible scenes of the morning, and from

the imprisonment to which all the rest who had been found in the chapel had apparently been subjected.

“ I found refuge in the wood,” she replied. “ I saw you and our poor Emily fly through the door beside the staircase. Those who rushed in pursuit of you cut off the same path from any one else ; but in a moment after, I remarked that the door into the forest was comparatively free, and with what little strength I possessed, I made my way to it, found it open, and got into the park. There, amidst the brushwood and the long grass, I contrived to conceal myself, even while they were searching for you through every part of the forest. I have been too much accustomed through life, my dear Henry, to such terrible scenes, not to have all my faculties at command, to remark every thing that passes ; and I soon gathered, by one sign or another, that those who pursued you had been baffled in their chace. I might have got away on foot ; but as my name is probably in the warrant from the Council of State, they

would soon have found me if I returned to my own poor dwelling; and I also had some hope of seeing you and our dear Emily again. I remained therefore concealed till about half an hour ago, when, on approaching the chapel, I saw some one engaged in lighting the lamp, and apparently about to rifle the dead. He saw me too, and took me, I believe, for something unearthly, for he fled with no small speed; and I remained watching near the door, fearful of entering, lest he should return, yet sufficiently overcome with fatigue and exhaustion to covet repose even by these poor silent things of clay."

My story, as far as I thought fit to tell it, was soon told; and Lady Margaret, without absolutely promising to accompany Emily and myself to France, agreed at once to return with me to the place where I had left one so dear to us both.

"Come and rest in the great hall, dear lady," I said; "I have yet some duties to perform here, and I have to drive back some of the wolves to Exeter. After that, we will re-

join our Emily as you so kindly call her, and determine the plans to which this terrible day must drive us."

After supporting Lady Margaret to the hall, I led my two sailors at once to the little parlour as it was called, where my page had seen the fanatics through the window; and with pistols in our hands, we entered the room at once. Habacuc Grimstone, with his nose glistening from the streams of the strong waters before him, sat at one end of the table; and another of his tribe—I neither know nor cared who—at the other. Both started upon their feet; but their feet, from the godly potations in which they had been indulging, were any thing but steady beneath them; and though Habacuc, unsheathing his sword, exclaimed, "Lo! I will go forth against the Philistines," a blow with the butt-end of the pistol brought him to his seat, both more sober and more pacific.

The other worthy showed no signs of pugnacity whatever. His first exclamation had been "It is the spectre!" but we soon furnished him

with very convincing proofs of our substantial existence.

It is useless to dwell upon what followed ; I found that Grimstone, and his companion, and a clerk, who had enacted sentinel, had courageously remained after the soldiers had carried off their prisoners, in order, as they said, to keep the house and all that it contained for the Parliamentary commissioners, who were expected late the next evening. What part of the spoil of the Philistines, as they called us, they intended to appropriate to themselves as the reward of their bravery, I do not know ; but I am sorry to say, that I ordered their hands to be tied behind their backs, and made the sailors impel them for a mile on the road to Exeter with horsewhips, which were applied most dexterously. The bellowings of the fanatics rang in my ears for long, as they were driven on the road, roaring for mercy, and cursing Walter Dixon for the precipitancy with which he had thought fit to withdraw his troops, and march his prisoners towards London.

I have blamed myself since for the treatment

that I showed them ; but, at the time, believed myself to be highly merciful, in not hanging them over the gate, to welcome the Parliamentary commissioners the following day.

CHAPTER IV.

MY next task was to examine whether any of the old servants had been left in the house ; and oh ! what a feeling of desolation—what a sense of the breaking up of old associations—of the eternal destruction of that sweet thing home, came over my heart, as I paced through the lonely chambers of my paternal dwelling, and the wide echoing of my footsteps spoke the dead vacancy of all. Every room had its memories and its feelings. The places where I had played in infancy, and ranged in boyhood, and dreamed in youth, each with the melancholy voice of silence, told that all I remembered, bright joys and transient sorrows, the sports of my earlier, the visions of my latter days, be-

longed to the solemn, the unchangeable past. The old familiar faces too, that had surrounded me from my birth to my manhood, were all gone ; and the only person I could discover in the house, was an old man who had been butler in former days, but had resigned his keys a year before, to a younger and more active man, and had since enjoyed ease and dignity as a retired officer of the household.

After his first surprise at seeing me was over, I learned from him, that all the servants had been either carried away to Exeter as prisoners, or driven out of the house, except a party of women, whom Habacuc Grimstone had locked up in an upper room, praying all the while that he might not be led into temptation. The old butler had been left to serve the magistrate and his companions ; and after making him open the door for the poor girls, who came out of the dark room where they had been confined, one after another, like pigeons out of a dovecot, I chose the two eldest of the bevy, and with the old man, returned to the chapel to perform the most painful task of all. As I crossed the hall,

however, to my surprise, I found little Ball-o'-fire, who had been sent by Emily to ascertain that I was safe ; and, charging him to tell her that the house was clear of all enemies, and that I would join her in an hour, I loaded him with some refreshments, of which I knew she must stand much in need, and bade him conduct Lady Margaret Langleigh to the cave.

The sailors had by this time returned, and I proceeded to the chapel, in order to deposit the remains of my father in the vault which contained the dust of many of our ancestors. It was a sad and terrible task ; and though he had been stern and reserved towards his children, as towards every one, yet as I gazed upon the marble countenance of the dead, on which death had left scarcely a change of expression, and felt that my eyes beheld that countenance for the last time, every kind word that he had spoken in his life rang in my ear—every fine and noble quality rose to my mind ; and the spirit of Lord Masterton, purified from every blemish by affection and regret, was present to the memory of his son, even as that spirit, I

humbly trust, stands before the throne of mercy, purified by the love of his Redeemer.

The bullet which had carried his death along with it, had passed through his chest from side to side, but little of his blood was spilt ; and his limbs lay calm and composed, as if the body had scarcely felt the parting of the soul. With my own hands I wrapped his head in his cloak, and raising the stone that covered the steps into the vault, we bore him down amongst the dusty memorials of a past race. The coffins of the dead stood round about us on every side ; and the consciousness of all the many tears which must have been shed over that spot, seemed to justify and yet repress my own. We dug a grave under the pavement of the vault ; and, placing the body within, I slowly, and with feelings that are difficult to tell, laid the first earth upon my father's head. The drops burst forth as I gave the mattock to another hand ; and I too added the tribute of my tears to the sad record of that vault, where generation after generation had wept the broken ties of kindred affection. When all was finished, I laid my

father's star and ribbon upon the grave, to mark the spot for future years ; and reascending to the chapel, we replaced the stone above the vault.

As we did so, I observed lying near, a folded paper, in the form of a letter, which had evidently dropped unnoticed in the struggle of that morning ; and taking it up, I looked for the address. There was none upon it, however, and it had been apparently enclosed in a larger packet, for it was without a seal, and open. Occupied with other thoughts, I held it in my hand for a moment ; and it was a chance whether I threw it down, without farther examination, or sought for the contents. At length I unfolded it as I walked from the chapel, and what I saw soon made me pause. It contained but a few lines, written by a female hand, but they were to this effect :

“ Do not doubt, beloved ! I am ready and willing to sacrifice all for you. Let every thing proceed as if you consented to the whole. Let the ceremony begin, if it be necessary. I have

the promise of one who never yet failed me, that it shall be interrupted. However, mark well, that, whatever you do, and whatever occurs, you make no resistance, for though what takes place may seem to menace your safety, remember that your safety has been taken care of by your

ELEANOR."

And was it my brother — could it indeed be my brother, who had drawn down upon his family all the misery which that day had produced? Such was the first question I asked myself, as I saw that the billet I held in my hand was evidently the writing of Lady Eleanor Fleming, and doubted not for a moment, that it had been addressed to Frank Masterton.

The joy which the Page had remarked in his countenance, on receiving a packet that morning, the frequent journeys of Gabriel Jones to Exeter, and a thousand circumstances in my brother's conduct, which had appeared strange, were at once explained, by the supposition that Lady Eleanor had undertaken to free him from his difficult situation with regard to Emily, and

had fatally fulfilled her promise. Yet what, I asked myself, could she hope by the means she had used — what but destruction even to the person she loved? Or had she and Frank both been deceived by some deeper plotter still, of whom Gabriel Jones was but another tool? To this opinion my mind turned more and more strongly, as I remembered Frank's anxiety to speak with me alone that very morning. Such a formidable display of military force as had been brought against us, the despatch of a Major-general from London, the arrest or death of some of the noblest men in Devonshire, could not be all done to please a woman — could not be all the machinations of a rascally valet.

Still it was evident that the correspondence between Lady Eleanor and Frank Masterton had never ceased since he had returned to his paternal dwelling. Still it was clear, that a passion which could lead him only into crime and sorrow, — a passion which I had fancied was dying away, had been nourished and encouraged, even while he was affecting courtship towards the dear, pure girl, of whose hand

he had so nearly deprived me ; and I could not but shudder when I considered the mastery which that passion must have attained over his once strong and commanding mind, to make him stoop to such deceit ; and fancied the agony that he must feel, from the great share which that deceit had had in his father's death.

I doubted not, however, that punishment—severe and bitter as it must be, when mingled with the scourging of their own conscience—had by this time overtaken both my unhappy brother, and her who had led him on to destruction. I felt sure that both had been deceived ; and that while Frank was at this time a prisoner, destined perhaps to be one of the many sacrifices hourly making to political rancour, loaded with the reproaches of his own heart, and the consciousness that to gratify a criminal passion he had contributed to his own fate, to the death of his father, and the ruin of his family, Lady Eleanor Fleming would have before her the sad spectacle of him she loved so passionately, ruined, and perhaps

slain, by the very means she had taken to withdraw him from his own duty, while she ran headlong into the breach of her most sacred obligations.

How much better, I thought — how much better would it have been for Frank to have boldly told my father that he could not love Emily Langleigh — to have acknowledged that he loved another, but that his love was hopeless, and to have sought counsel and support from him, placed by nature to afford it to his children. Oh, that fatal want of moral courage, to how many sins and miseries does it not lead the children of earth! If we dared but encounter our weaknesses, how many more terrible enemies should we escape in our crimes!

Yet while I thus reasoned, I felt that I had not been myself quite sincere. Had I openly informed my brother or my father of my love for Emily Langleigh, perhaps some portion of what had befallen, might have been averted. But still, though I took to myself some blame, I felt that my motives and inten-

tions were right; that I had made deep sacrifices, and that I had been actuated by no base or selfish principle.

Such may be considered the summary of the thoughts to which the letter I had discovered gave rise; but other more immediate considerations now forced themselves upon me. I found that a double seal had been placed upon all the doors through the house; and I doubted not that it was the purpose of the Parliamentary commissioners, who were to arrive the next day, to appropriate and divide every thing that they could discover in the place; and I feared that those valuable family papers, which nothing could restore, might be lost or destroyed amidst the rapacious pillaging that was likely to ensue.

To carry them with me, in the uncertain and adventurous life to which I was probably destined, would be as great a risk as leaving them where they were; and though the house, like all the houses of its epoch, contained many places constructed for the purposes of concealment, yet the official plunderers of the Parlia-

ment had, by frequent practice, become wonderfully skilful in detecting all such repositories. Feeling, however, that a change of times must come, when very probably every document of our present state might prove invaluable, I made free with the Parliamentary seals on my father's cabinet; and taking out the deeds and titles which it contained, I proceeded alone to one of the most remote and petty bed-chambers in the house, where raising a square of the oak floor, I deposited the papers, covered them over with a heap of flue and dust, which had collected there during many years, and replacing the board, took care to leave no trace of its removal.

The thought crossed my mind of carrying away with me what plate and jewels I could transport to the ship; but I could not bear the idea of pillaging my father's house, though I knew that all I left would fall into far more unworthy hands. I contented myself, therefore, with sending one of the servants to the apartments of my dear Emily, to bring me the jewels which belonged to her, and such part

of her wardrobe as might be most useful to her. Here, however, I found that the plunder had already proceeded far. The girl indeed brought me a quantity of her mistress's clothes, but not a jewel was to be seen ; and in my own chamber I discovered that the same rapacity had been exercised. The very hilt had been wrenched off one of my swords, for the gold with which it was decorated ; and one or two trinkets that I possessed, such as rings and hat-buttons, had been swept away with the rest of the moveable plunder.

There was something in this reckless disregard to every thing that is at other moments held sacred, that made me sick at heart ; and bidding the servants, who had all parents or relations amongst our tenantry, disperse with the morning light, I loaded the sailors of the sloop with the different articles of apparel, which I thought might prove useful in our flight ; and once more crossed the threshold of my paternal dwelling.

The moon had by this time risen high, and I could not forbear descending the steps, and

walking to the far extreme of the bowling-green, to take one more glance of the old mansion as a whole, before I left it perhaps for ever.

Oh what a place of memories is the home of our youth ; the spot in which we have passed that time of life when every fresh idea, won by the young mind from the world around it, is a positive joy ! Those are the days in which we gain ; manhood is the time in which we use—perhaps abuse—the store ; and age is the period when every hour is a loss. Look at what spot of earth we will, there is none that we shall see with such tender feelings, as the passing-place of our early hours.

There it stood before me, with its tall dark masses, rising calm and clear upon the solemn moonlight of the sky ; while round about, the immemorial trees swept far and wide, a sea of green waving branches, on whose rounded heads the clear light of the planet poured in effulgent gentleness. From every pinnacle and tower, under each old oak and heavy chesnut, from the careful garden with its trim straight rows, from each glade, and grove, and avenue,

and lawn, looked forth phantom remembrances of the past. The whole scene was living with thronged associations; but they were associations that for every smile called down a shower of tears. The wringing yearning of the heart for the return of hours gone for ever, was more than I could long bear, and plunging into the dark path that led towards the cliff, I left that place of many memories behind.

The two sailors that I had left to guard the road, were firm upon their watch; and as I passed on to the cave, I found that my provident Page had added lights to the refreshment that I had bidden him carry thither; and under their influence the place of our retreat formed a wild and singular scene, of which the boy himself, scarce twelve years old—standing at the mouth of the cavern, with a pistol in his hand, backed by the dim half-lighted excavation, on whose damp and ragged roof and sides the rays of the lamps caught with a fitful glistening—formed not the least extraordinary feature. I found Emily's head resting on the bosom of Lady Margaret Langleigh, whose sad experi-

ence in misfortune well qualified her to counsel and assist us in our present state. Each had been weeping; and I saw at once, by Emily's eyes, that all our mutual feelings were now known to her companion; but I saw also by the smile of joy that lighted up the countenances of both on my return, that those feelings were likely to meet with no opposition, from even the maturer judgment of Lady Margaret.

"You have acted nobly, my dear Henry," she said, as I advanced towards them; and those were words of no small consolation, for at moments when we find the noblest and best minds failing around us, it is but natural that we should doubt the very motives of our bosoms. "You have acted nobly, my dear Henry, and well deserve your reward," said Lady Margaret, "and I thank God that brought me near you, for I hope to be of comfort and assistance to you both. Let me be as a mother to you, my children. This land is no longer a land for me. I have nothing to bind me to it, and it will be wiser for us all to spend a season in France, till the storms that desolate

our native country are passed. My presence, too, will be a protection to this dear girl, till such time as circumstances permit you, Henry, to be her lawful protector."

"And do you then, my dear Lady," I demanded, "do you then approve of the too severe scruples which Emily—I will not say unkindly—but at least somewhat harshly, places between us. Would it not be better—far better—for this dear girl to yield me her hand at once, as soon as we arrive in France; and give me that right to guard, to support, and guide her, which no other title but that of her husband can bestow?"

"I do not say that she would not be justified in so doing," replied Lady Margaret, "but her not doing so, my dear Harry, proceeds from a delicacy of feelings which the man who seeks her for his wife should be the last to wish lessened even by a shade. Do not suppose, Henry Masterton, that during the time I have spent in the same dwelling with you, and Emily, and your brother, that I have been blind to what was passing around me. Do not suppose

that I did not see your passionate love towards her, or her affection for you, unacknowledged as it was even to her own heart ; and still less imagine that I have not seen all along the coldness and apathy of your brother towards the woman he was going to wed. That apathy was difficult to account for. It surprised, it distressed me. I mentioned it to your father ; who replied coldly, that it was all manner, that he had had it from a boy. The only other person whom I could have consulted, was afar ; but still I was unsatisfied ; and had more than once nearly demanded of you — yes, of you yourself, Henry Masterton, whether, in the course of your expedition into Kent, your brother had formed any connexion that he was afraid or ashamed to acknowledge to his parent ?”

She fixed her eyes keenly on me as she spoke, as if the question were fully as much present as past, and I felt that I reddened under her scrutiny.

“ I feel myself still bound, Lady Margaret,” I answered, “ as I felt myself bound even when it almost cost me existence, to refrain from di-

vulging any thing I may casually know of my brother's private affairs ; but it is very evident to us all—”

“ You need say no more, Harry,” replied Lady Margaret. “ I see and understand it all. Before I came to Masterton House, Captain Charles Watson, who had once been one of my dead husband's attendants, and who commanded a troop in the regiment you raised, informed me, that your brother halted so long at a village in Kent, where he spent his whole days with a fair widow, that the soldiers murmured loudly at his delay ; that your brother was not wounded in battle, but in a duel ; and that you commanded the regiment on all occasions of active service. I ask you not whether this be true, my dear young gentleman ; but I tell you that I came to your dwelling grieving that the hand of my poor Emily was to be given to the elder instead of the younger brother. How much more did I grieve, when I found that for that purpose, the course of mutual love was to be crossed in every way ! But to speak no more of what is past, I now feel

sure from all I have seen, and heard, and pondered, that your brother will willingly resign to you a hand which he does not value at its desert. As soon as he does so, Emily, I am certain, will not hesitate a moment. But till then, Harry, do not press her to violate what she regards as a duty."

"I will not, Lady Margaret," I replied, "I will not, dearest Emily; but under such circumstances, my beloved, you must let me take the speediest measures to bring my happiness near. Duty and inclination both call me now towards London. I cannot, I ought not, to leave my brother without aid or assistance, under his present circumstances. I must strive, if possible, to set him free, and at the same time I will undertake to gain his resignation of a hand, that is mine by a thousand better rights than his. I will first accompany you to the coast of France; and then, after having left you in security and comfort, I will disguise my person, and under a feigned name make my way to London. Few people know me, if any, in that part of the country; and though I may

be forced to dissemble, my dissembling in such a cause, is more than justifiable.

Emily seemed not a little alarmed at the idea of my venturing into the very vortex of political strife; and I almost believe, that had I pressed her to recant her scruples at that moment, she would not have persisted in awaiting my brother's formal resignation of her hand. But the anxious and painful scenes through which I had lately passed, gave me a sort of thirst for that final and complete certainty, which would admit of no doubt or change; and I would have encountered difficulties a thousand-fold greater than my proposed enterprise presented, to remove every shade of fear or regret from my union with Emily Langleigh.

I was sanguine also, and full of hope. The consciousness of being beloved, gave a new spring to my courage and my expectations; and I felt in my bosom that spirit of enterprise, which when it is strong and permanent, contributes even a greater share than genius, to the accomplishment of great designs.

I now informed Lady Margaret, that the

sloop was at my command for the next month, and inquired whether it might not be wiser to turn our prow towards Holland, whose jealousy of the Parliamentary power was avowed, and whose internal circumstances were tranquil, rather than to France, which, under an infant king, and a weak regency, was threatened with disorders as terrible almost as those which convulsed England.

“As I go with you,” replied the lady, “my voice shall be for France, for many, many, many reasons;” and, seeing some surprise in my countenance, at her strong predilection for that country, she added, “In the first place, French is as familiar to us all as our own tongue, which, Heaven knows, Dutch is not. In the next place, I hold a small pension from the French Government, given to me by our unhappy Queen; and believe me, my dear Henry, we shall need to husband all our resources; for though, doubtless, you believe, in the blessed confidence of youth, that with your high spirit, and your good sword, you can win wherewithal to support yourself and Emily at any

time; yet I, from the sad experience of age, know that such hopes are often deceitful, and can tell you, that dull want and carking care are hard to be borne, even when love lends his light pinions to aid us in supporting the load."

Emily looked as if she doubted the hard truth that the good old lady spoke; but by assuring Lady Margaret that I had enough to bear our expenses for some time, if managed with frugality, I did more to calm her fears on that score, than any professions of my powers of endurance would have been able to effect.

I now proposed that the sailors, whom I had left with their companions on the watch, should bring in the packages with which I had charged them, and which contained the means of forming a temporary bed in the cave for Emily and Lady Margaret; but to this the elder lady objected.

"Nay, nay, Henry," she said, "in five years of turbulence and danger, I have learned that in nothing man should lose the moment, and that of all moments, the most necessary to

seize, is the moment of escape. Many a noble head has rolled upon the scaffold, by delaying till to-morrow. Let us, my son, depart to-night. Under such a moon as that which is now shining without, we shall be half way to France before to-morrow morning. Hie thee then down to the water, and let us put the green waves between us and danger before another sun rises above the friendly sea."

Emily too, though exhausted and fatigued, was eager to depart; and I was not unwilling. On going on board, and speaking with the skipper, I found that he also was anxious to quit a shore where he had accomplished all that he wished, and where all that he could expect farther was difficulty, if not danger. The appearance of the soldiers, in the morning, had awakened fears in his bosom, which were not yet allayed; the wind was favourable, the sea was calmer than in the evening, and every thing was prepared to set sail.

I accordingly communicated these tidings to Emily and Lady Margaret; the packages were sent down to the boat, the sailors were recalled,

and I led Emily out into the open air. A mingled sensation of terror and agitation seized her as she came forth from the mouth of the cave, and she had nearly fainted ; but a moment's pause recalled her courage and renewed her strength, and proceeding slowly down the path to the cove, we entered the boat, which immediately pushing off, we reached the ship, after rolling for a few minutes over the round unsteady waves.

When we were all on board, orders were instantly given for getting under weigh for St. Malo. The only cabin that the ship contained, was appropriated to Emily and Lady Margaret ; and, at my request, they went down to rest before the vessel got out into the more turbulent waters, that rolled beyond the sheltering arms of the land on each side of the bay. For my own part, sitting down on the deck, with little Ball-o'-fire coiled up almost like a dog at my feet, I gazed now at the electric waves as they flashed in living fire by the side, and now at the moonlight line of coast, that kept slowly receding from my view. Ere an hour

had passed, we had issued forth from my own sweet bay. The wind freshened in our favour, and, holding on a steady course over the wide sea, we put league after league of the dim waters between us and the merry shores of England.

CHAPTER V.

WE will pass over the voyage, which offered no incident of any moment. The wind was high, but full in our favour ; and the sea, though rough, was not so much so as might have been expected. About seven o'clock the next morning, we caught a distant view of Guernsey ; and about twelve, the long line of the French coast, with some low, sandy ground in front, and a range of high rocks and cliffs to the left, appeared in sight. Emily, who had been accustomed from very early years to sail about the bay in my boat, did not suffer at all from seasickness ; and leaving Lady Margaret below, who, after a terrible night of illness, had now fallen asleep, she came up to watch with me our approach to the shores of France.

For two hours she sat beside me, as the sloop glided on over the blue waters, towards the port, that every moment grew more and more distinct ; and those two hours were the shortest that my remembrance can recall through life. Our conversation was desultory and dreamy, but full of hope and love, and not the less sweet, perhaps, that it was tempered by painful memories. All the dreams of our early days came up before us—all the dear sports of our youth. We called up every scene in the past ; and tracing out the long progress of our mutual affection through the gone years, now that we knew and understood our feelings, we wondered that we had not known them before. Living almost entirely alone, and seeing very little female society, Emily had retained all the beautiful delicacy of a woman's feelings, unmingled with any of the artificial reserve which so often mixes with, or perhaps I might say, supplies its place. Her affection was acknowledged ; and she felt no fear in letting me know the extent of that affection. She sat beside me, and aided me to recall a thousand bright moments

of happiness that we had spent together ; and on the pictures of the past thus brought before our eyes, the sunshine of love poured full and strong, and lighted every object with a splendour not its own.

Thus time flew ; and almost before we knew it, the mouth of the river Rance opened before us, with the beautiful bay into which it expands, and the multitude of rocky islands starting out of the pure waves, and glistening in the lustrous atmosphere of noon ; while high upon our left rose the stern fortifications of St. Malo, and the isthmus of sand which connects, and hardly connects it, with the main land. The moment the ship dropped her anchor, the ramparts above were crowded with people ; and when we had landed, a thousand busy tongues about us almost deafened us with questions. Poor Emily was quite bewildered and confused ; but, after a few formalities on entering the town, which were at that time greatly abridged in favour of English refugees, we were permitted to seek a dwelling ; and soon,

in the quiet of our own apartment, had leisure to congratulate each other on our security.

It was a strange and almost awful feeling, I confess, to find myself in the midst of a people with whom I had no feelings in common ; who wished not with my wishes, and whose sympathies were none of mine : — to be in a strange land, without acquaintance, without resources, and to feel that the ports of my native country were closed by a thousand dangers against my footsteps. I should have experienced that feeling of solitude still more, but as I gazed on Emily, I felt that all I loved was with me ; that my friends, my acquaintance, my country, my world was in her bosom ; and that, with her by my side, the desert itself would seem scarce a wilderness in my eyes.

Little Ball-o'-fire had been the first on shore ; and *Monsieur le Page*, with his gay dress, and flashing black eyes, seemed to captivate at once all the women of the place, who had gathered round to see us land. The boy, however, could not speak a word of French, and thus lost much

of his advantage ; but, nevertheless, he was calculated to make his way very well without a tongue ; and within ten minutes after our arrival at the inn, he was in the street, and surrounded by half a dozen *Maloins*, asking him a thousand questions in a breath, none of which he understood, or would have answered if he had.

Though it had been already determined that we were not to proceed to Paris till my return from London, yet we soon resolved to quit the town of St. Malo, whose high walls and low streets gave us more the sensation of imprisonment than security. It mattered little, indeed, which way we turned our steps ; and the facility of procuring boats to ascend the river Rance was our sole motive, I believe, for choosing the town of Dinan for our next resting-place. The sail up that river, the Rance, is perhaps as beautiful as any thing that the varied earth can produce ; and the morning of our departure was happily in accordance with the scene. Large masses of autumnal clouds floated heavily over the sky, but still the sunshine was predominant ; and the shadows cast upon dif-

ferent parts of the scene but served to give the bright light of the rest, a greater degree of brilliancy. On glided our boat; and, as the stream wound in and out amongst its high banks, we soon lost sight of St. Malo. Now darting through a narrow pass between immense cold rocks, which seemed scarcely to leave space for the passage of the boat, we could almost have touched the stony cliffs on either side; and now floating over the bosom of what seemed a wide, calm lake, we could perceive no outlet till we nearly reached the opposite shores. Thus alternately confined between tall crags, and pouring out into wide basins, the beautiful river flowed on; and, breasting its stream, we passed on in sunshine and shade, till, at last, rushing out from one of the deep gorges through which it poured, we beheld an immense extent of undulating country, covered here and there with wood, and broken in various spots with crags, while, brightly relieved by the deep shadow of a cloud which covered all the foreground, the town of Dinan appeared on its high hill behind, with its old battlements catching

the full light of the day, as they hung over the bold masses of rock on which the town is perched.

It is wonderful how the feelings of all our hearts were soothed and softened by the beautiful scenery through which we passed. There is something, I know not what, in the aspect of nature in her loveliness, that has a strange gift of happiness ; and could I choose, when any of life's great misfortunes fall upon me, I should desire to be carried to some new and magnificent scenes, certain that I should thence derive greater consolation than the tongue of eloquence ever yet poured forth. Is it, that in the presence of the great and lovely works of God, the petty cares of humanity are reproved ?—or is it that their beauty and their harmony convince the soul of his goodness and his love, while their majesty brings to our small senses a tangible image of his great power ; and the whole shows that his will is right ?

I do not know—but whereas at St. Malo some sad memories, and painful anticipations, had begun to crowd upon our minds, before we got

to Dinan, a softening shadow had fallen over the past, while hope lighted up the future anew. In pursuance of our plan, as soon as we reached the town we made inquiries, as if casually, in regard to the various convents in the neighbourhood; and having found one which promised in every respect to afford a comfortable abode to Emily and Lady Margaret, during my absence, I proceeded to ascertain whether the Superior were inclined to receive two English ladies as boarders. She was a venerable old lady, not unlike Lady Margaret herself in appearance; and, after conversing with her for some time in the parlour, I found that the only objection would be the fact of the ladies being Protestants.

“If they had no scruple, however,” the abbess said, “to attend the service of the chapel, she would willingly receive them;” and it was finally arranged, that for the small sum of thirty crowns per month, they were to have the best accommodation which the convent could afford. The next morning I conducted Lady Margaret and Emily to their

abode; and leaving in the hands of the elder lady all the money which would not be wanted for my journey, I took leave of them with as cheerful an aspect as I could assume; but with many a bitter pang and painful apprehension in my heart.

I now returned immediately to the inn, and hearing that in the higher part of the town a large horse-market was actually going on, I climbed the steep street called the Jerseval, and easily procured two of a fine and hardy race of Britany horses, to carry myself and little Ball-o'-fire back upon our way to England. Their services were immediately wanted; and while they were eating some corn, to enable them to proceed with vigour, I took care that they should be fitted with such saddles and equipments as the place could afford. My departure, however, was delayed for half an hour, by my poor dog Rupert running up to me in the inn-yard, having made his escape from the convent, where I had left him with Emily and Lady Margaret. Not choosing to trust his safe return to the *garçon d'écurie*, and un-

willing either to agitate Emily or to distress myself, by going again to the convent, I sent the Page to carry back poor Rupert ; and during his absence, I encountered a person, whose acquaintance, however undesired at first, has followed me to the present day.

I was standing beside one of the horses I had bought, ready to put my foot in the stirrup ; the little valise containing all the clothes I thought necessary to take with me, was on the other beast, which was held ready for the Page, and some degree of haste and impatience perhaps was in my countenance, when a large chesnut charger, which from its managed paces I concluded must have belonged to a troop of mountebanks, and grown grey in their service, was led out of one of the stables, followed by a person whose appearance was somewhat singular.

He was a tall meagre man, of about fifty-five years of age, with grizzled mostachoes and hair, and a forehead high, but somewhat narrow ; while his head rose up in an immense pile towards the apex, which had grown rather bald. His hat was in hand, and even as he came forth

from the stable, when the only thing he could have been contemplating was his horse's tail, there was a simpering smile of blessed contentment upon his countenance, that spoke him at once the happiest man on earth in his opinion of himself.

His dress was somewhat fantastical also. The tops of his large riding-boots were crammed with frills of lace. His vest was green, the baldric of his sword pink, as were his stockings, while the garters, which were very full, were green, and his cloak dark blue. His hat offered a medium between the Spanish slouched hat and the steeple-crowned beaver of that day, which—with a gold band, and a feather stuck in at the side and leaning languishingly back over his left shoulder—completed his dress.

The moment he saw me, he left his horse; and composing his countenance into an expression of the most conceited modesty imaginable, he advanced towards me, made a bow, took another step, and made a second bow, and then begged the honour of saluting me. I was in no frame of mind to be either desirous of forming a fresh acquaintance, or even to be

amused with the singularities of my new companion, and consequently I returned his civility but coldly.

“Monsieur was an Englishman?” the stranger asked ; but before I could answer, he declared he saw it at once, by a certain *aimable froideur* of manner, which was peculiarly English. He then went on to feel sure that this was the first time I had been in France.

“Sir,” continued he, “you are a happy man ; I have often wished that for two or three days I could be a foreigner, just to enjoy to the full the exquisite delight of seeing France for the first time. We, Sir—we who are accustomed to the beauty of our country, the grace of our countrymen, the loveliness of our women, and in fact, all the fascinations of France, we become dull, heavy, apathetic, to things that must ravish your senses, who behold them for the first time, and which must almost put you beside yourselves with enjoyment and admiration. Sir, I envy you the privilege of seeing France for the first time.”

I could not but smile at this address, although my thoughts were any thing but turned to-

wards amusement ; and I replied that I hoped to find that delight in his country which he imagined would fall to my share, for that the circumstances which drove Englishmen from their native land in the present times, rendered some compensation desirable. I was sorry after this reply had passed my lips ; for it might naturally have led to some inquiries concerning the political state of England, to which I should not have felt disposed to reply ; but my companion's mind was wholly occupied with one subject.

“ Doubt it not, Sir ! doubt it not ! ” he replied. “ What, under heaven, is there that man may not find in France ? But, Sir, you are going to ride. This probably is your Page, who is now coming in. Let me hope that our way may lie together, in order that as we go I may have the pleasure of explaining to you some things that may be advantageous for you to hear.”

“ I am afraid,” I replied, “ that the direction I shall follow is not by any means certain ; and also as it is my intention to travel as quickly

as possible, the pace at which I go might not be agreeable to any one less pressed for time than I happen to be at this moment."

"Sir," said my new companion, "the way is perfectly as indifferent to me as it can be to you. I am travelling solely to enjoy the beauties and pleasures of a country unrivalled in ancient or modern Europe; and, for the delight it will give me to accompany you upon the road, I would slacken my horse's pace to a walk. As it is, I am accustomed to ride very fast. Allow me at the same time to point out to you, that there is no country in the world where a stranger meets with so much attention, where he is welcomed with such kindness, entertained with such hospitality, protected with such magnanimity, defended with such generosity, or served with such liberality, as in France."

I wanted no society, and at first felt inclined to reject the stranger's proffered company with some rudeness; but difficulties and dangers of great magnitude teach us no better lesson than to bear trifling ills without wincing. He can

do me no harm, I thought, after a short pause ; and it is not worth while even to give his innocent vanity a moment's pain, far less quarrel with him outright, to rid myself of an hour or two's babble, which may perhaps serve to divert my thoughts from things that are painful, if not dangerous to rest upon. I bowed my head, therefore, in token of assent to his proposal ; and, as little Ball-o'-fire had now returned, I mounted my horse and walked him forward towards the archway that led into the street. My companion at the same time laid his hand upon his horse's shoulder ; and though apparently neither very young nor very pliant of muscle, he sprang into the saddle without putting foot in stirrup, raised himself bolt upright on his beast, with a look of ineffable self-satisfaction, and riding up to my side, proceeded with his panegyric on his native country.

“As I was saying, Sir, when your Page arrived,” he continued, “what is there under heaven that man may not find in France ?—either given to her naturally by her climate,

or brought by the extent of her commerce, and the attractive glory of her name. Situated at a just distance both from the equator and the pole, France comprises within itself the most temperate portion of the earth, and excels all the countries of Europe in three particulars—*primo*, in being the best situated; *secundo*, in being the most magnanimous and warlike; and *tertio*, in being the most learned and most witty.”

I was now beginning to be in some degree entertained with my companion, from the very excess of absurdity to which he carried the madness of national vanity; and, willing to hear more as I was destined to hear at all, I resolved to offer a sufficient degree of opposition to call forth the peculiarities of his character. I am afraid, however, there was a touch of Frank’s inclination to sneer mingled with my reply, as I said,

“In regard to learning, wit, and situation, doubtless France is superior to any other country on the face of the earth; but as to being

more warlike, I am afraid that cannot well be proved at the present moment, when England is nothing but one scene of strife from one end to the other."

"Your pardon ! your pardon, my dear Sir," replied the Frenchman, "rebellion cannot justly be called war ; and the bloody struggles which are taking place at this moment in England, cannot be held honourable to any party. At the same time, were such civil dissensions any proof of a warlike character, the same are now actually occurring in France, only with this difference, that the French, with the magnanimous loyalty which distinguishes them above any other people, only make war against the minister, not against the king."

I had no idea, from the specimen of his intellect afforded by his national vanity, that my companion was capable of such subtle distinctions ; but I had afterwards many occasions to discover that his patriotic prejudices, if they may so be called, formed the very weakness of a mind, which, on other points, was naturally shrewd ; and that, even on those subjects, he

could bring many a specious argument to bear with great seeming force. In short, he was the very Don Quixote of nationality ; and his powers of lauding his beloved country seemed perfectly inexhaustible.

“ Do not suppose, my dear Sir,” he proceeded, “ that my eyes are blinded by partiality for my native country. On my honour, I feel myself as free from national prejudice, as it is possible to be. I see all the excellence of other nations ; and admire the peculiar virtues of the Englishman, the German, the Swiss, the Italian, the Spaniard. Nevertheless, I cannot help giving to France the palm, especially in all warlike matters. It is, Sir, the theatre of honour and the temple of glory. I am well aware that all other nations upon the earth would attempt, though in vain, to contest this pre-eminence ; because the desire which each person naturally feels to form part of a race more powerful and more illustrious than their neighbours, teaches them to believe that the truth is as they wish ; without considering that, as there is but one sun in the sky, there

is but one France in the universe, which excels every other country, as much as the sun does every star."

I did not at all feel sure that my companion was not mad; and to ascertain the fact, I turned the conversation, as we passed along, to various other subjects, on all of which he spoke sensibly and shrewdly, as long as he did speak upon them; but, by a thousand most ingenious devices, he managed to turn gently back to France, however dissimilar the topic which we had begun with. To pass the time, I persisted in endeavouring to force him from his favourite matter; and, for more than an hour, strove in vain to pursue any other subject of conversation. At length, as from the high grounds near Dol, we caught a view of the Mont St. Michel, I said, I wondered that on so favourable a spot for astronomical purposes, an observatory had not been erected.

"It is very extraordinary indeed!" replied he, "but doubtless there is some good reason for it with which we are not acquainted. At a casual glance, we often think that things are both ne-

cessary to be done and easy of execution : ay, Sir, and even when we have given the matter some consideration, hold the same opinion ; when in fact, if we were to examine deeply, we should find that what we conceived easy was impossible ; what we judged necessary was useless. Now, my young friend, the best advice which I could give a stranger would be, to think—whatever seemed to him strange, or imperfect, or wrong, while travelling in France—that there is some excellent cause for its being as he sees. Now in regard to astronomical science, a person who did not appreciate fully the excellence of France, might draw from such observations as you have just made, that those branches of science did not flourish amongst us. The exact reverse, however, is known to be the case ; and in astronomy, geometry, natural philosophy, it is acknowledged by all, that we excel every thing that ancient or modern times have produced. Even while I speak, is not Descartes astonishing the world with some new discovery, and proving the superiority of his own country in all arts

and all sciences ? Is not Paris the general place of assembly for the learned and the scientific ? Do not they flock to France from every quarter of the habitable globe ?”

I now found that to attempt any change of subject was quite in vain, and therefore suffered my companion to pursue his happy reveries on the blessed excellence of his native country, uninterrupted, as we journeyed forward from Dol to Pontorson. These reveries indeed, when once suffered to proceed, seemed to absorb all his senses. He thought of nothing, he saw nothing else but France ; and wanted even that prying curiosity into the affairs of others, which I have met with in many of his countrymen. He asked me no questions, either concerning myself or my country ; and perfectly happy in being listened to so long on the subject nearest his heart, he pointed me out to the landlord of our auberge at Pontorson, in an under voice, as a *garçon du plus grand mérite* ; adding something however to express, what a pity it was that I was not a Frenchman.

CHAPTER VI.

THE landlord at Pontorson served us with great respect, and seemed to know my companion well, calling him Monsieur de Vitray. I consequently took an opportunity of inquiring who and what he was of the worthy aubergiste, whose house and appearance spoke respectability on his own part. The picture drawn of Monsieur de Vitray was very flattering. He had a large estate about seven leagues off, the innkeeper said, but as he was *vieux garçon*, he seldom lived at his chateau, but spent a part of his time in Paris, and the rest in travelling alone over the country. He was very charitable and liberal, he said further, accomplished and learned, according to an aubergiste's capa-

bilities of judging. "But," added the landlord with a roguish twinkle of the eye, "he loves his own country as well as any man I ever saw; and perhaps he has already told Monsieur how very fine a place it is."

This account satisfied me; for, with true English suspicion, I was beginning to fancy, as the stranger was very different from any specimen of human nature which I had hitherto seen, that he must be something different from what he seemed to be; and I had expected more than once, that he would either ask me to play, or attempt some other of the many ways with which French sharpers relieve gulls of their superfluous money.

Monsieur le Marquis de Vitray adhered to his invariable subject, however, during the whole evening; and as I did contrive to glean from the vast stubble field of his conversation, some occasional heads of real information concerning France and its present state, I was not absolutely annoyed, on finding that the journey which he had laid out for himself, before he met with me, led him towards Calais, and that con-

sequently we should most likely travel all the way together.

I did calculate indeed—though falsely—on his exhausting the subject of France; and I thought I perceived, from occasional glimpses of keen good sense, that I might derive both pleasure and advantage from his knowledge and acquirements, if I could but get him to quit the theme of his insanity, for his partiality towards his native country was nothing better. I therefore not unwillingly arranged to rise early the following morning, and pursue my journey in his company; and, telling me he was delighted to have a farther opportunity of pointing out to me the beauties and excellences of the splendid country we should have to pass through, he left me soon, and retired to bed.

Our onward journey offered little of any interest, but I found that the subject of France was not to be exhausted; and as my only resource, I led my companion to speak of the various parts of the country he had visited, which drew from him many curious details and descriptions, mingled still with immense and

extravagant praises of each and every part of the beloved realm, which was the god of his idolatry.

In return for my attention, I found that I had myself excited as much interest in the bosom of Monsieur de Vitray as any thing on earth not French could do; and towards the end of our sixth or seventh day's journey, he did pause to ask me several leading questions about myself and country. In regard to England, its productions, the manners of its inhabitants, and every other circumstance, except the political divisions of the times, he was totally and potently ignorant; and even of our civil wars he knew very little, except that they had driven many Englishmen into exile; and he mentioned one or two instances of the misery to which some of my noblest countrymen had been reduced by the total failure of all their resources.

My spirits were already sufficiently depressed, and this news did not tend to raise them; when to my surprise, my companion followed up his tidings, by an offer of pecuniary assist-

ance, in case my circumstances required it. I thanked him for his generosity ; but told him that for the time, I was in no need of such aid ; I added, however, as I found that at heart he was really a liberal and noble-minded man, that in case at any future time, I might need protection, countenance, or any of those services which the native of a country can show a foreigner, I would call upon him to remember his journey from Dinan to Calais.

“Do so ! do so !” he said, “and I shall only think myself acting with that propriety and justness of sentiment, which distinguishes the French above every other nation on the earth, when I do my best endeavours to serve you. But in France, Sir, you are sure to find friends. It is the peculiar privilege of her polite and happy people”—and he dashed once more into the old strain.

Our journey was somewhat longer than I had calculated upon, for as we got into the Comté d’Eu, we were obliged to make several considerable circuits to avoid spots which it seemed were notoriously infested by robbers. I was

at first inclined to treat the reports we heard at the inns, as the common exaggeration of that most marvellous race of men called innkeepers; but when I found even Monsieur de Vitray acknowledge [that various parts of the country called Ponthieu, were so famous for their free foresters that no one could pass without risking his purse, his life, or a detention of several days, in order to extort some ransom, I was obliged to believe a tale so disadvantageous to his native country. It was true, he said, that the principal part of these brigands were foreigners, and happy might the traveller think himself when he fell into the hands of a Frenchman, who was sure at least to show him courtesy, even while he cut his purse. We passed all these dangers, however, in safety; and the day of our arrival at Calais, another suspension of my companion's praises of France took place, as it seemed to strike him for the first time, that I was returning to England. On his asking if such were the case, I informed him that it was, and told him so far, that my object

was to procure the liberation of a brother, who was kept there in prison.

He entered with more warmth into the matter than I imagined he could have done; and, on enquiring into my means and hopes of success, he shook his head on hearing that I had neither any letter to the persons in power, who might protect me; nor any apparent business which might serve as a pretext to my stay in London.

“It will never do! it will never do!” he said. “Unless the English are very stupid indeed, they will find you out in a day. But stay, I know a worthy and respectable Avoué in Calais, who has transacted some business for me; and who manufactures, I am told, false papers for smugglers and contraband traders of all kinds; doubtless he can help us, and after supper we will go and consult him.”

Supper—and an excellent supper it was—was put upon the table; but its discussion promised to be much longer than I could either have expected or desired; for Monsieur de Vitray

took advantage of the excellence of some pigeons *en compote*, to lecture the garçon upon the superiority of France.

“Good God!” he cried, “what country is equal to France? Tell me, mon cher, are these exquisite pigeons the production of Calais; and were they really stewed in this house?”

The waiter assured him they were so, and he proceeded with increasing zeal. “It is an extraordinary thing—really it is an extraordinary thing, how much France excels all the countries of the earth in small things as well as great! Here, the hearing and the sight, and the smell and the taste, all receive their most perfect satisfaction. As to taste, who could doubt it, with such pigeons before them? But were it necessary to go into proof, it might easily be shown, that both by natural productions and by the art of dressing them, France is incomparably the land of good living. Are not our rivers larded with eels and lampreys, paved with tench and carp, filled with salmon and pike, thick with trout and perch? Does not

the air flutter with pheasants, partridges, ortolans, pigeons, plovers, wild duck, widgeons, teal? Are not the fields living with hares and rabbits? Are not our forests thronged with boars and deer, the stag, the roebuck and the fallow deer? Look at our other productions also! Sip the wines of Burgundy, Champagne, and Medoc! Taste the cheeses of Roquefort and Neufchatel, and Cental, the butter of the valley de Campan, the Pres vallée, and the Montd'or! Eat the fruits of Touraine and Languedoc! Season with the oil of Provence. Feed on the capons of Gascony and Maine! Play with the chickens of Caen, the frogs of Paris, and the snails of Epernay!—Go to Rome and Constantinople! traverse Germany and the United Provinces! pause in England! walk through Switzerland! rush across Spain! where—where—where will you meet a country like France? Nowhere! nowhere! on the face of the habitable globe.”

Gradually, as he spoke, turning all the time to the unhappy garçon, he had become more and more animated in his discourse; his sup-

per had ceased, his hand armed with the knife he had been using, was extended in the energy of declamation, while his eyes flashed, and his speech became loud and overpowering. The garçon drew a step back ; and little Ball-o'-fire, who sat beside me, without understanding a word that was passing, took the furious gestures he beheld as signals of approaching strife, and laid his hand upon his dagger.

I stopped it, however, before it sprang from its sheath ; and the consternation which his vehemence had caused, at length brought our good companion to his senses ; when suddenly resuming his calmness and his supper, he proceeded to the conclusion of his pigeon, without a word more.

When supper was over, we turned our steps, according to his first proposal, towards the attorney's house. Having wound through several dark streets, we at length reached the dwelling of the manufacturer of false papers, to which we were admitted by a dirty woman servant, who lighted us up a long and narrow stair, to the chamber, where the attorney was

busy in his calling. He was a little, sharp, dingy man, with eyes like black currants, and a beard like a bottle-brush.

It was not till Monsieur de Vitray told him who he was, however, that he remembered my conductor.

“Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes!” reiterated he, as soon as it was explained. “I remember very well;—yes, yes! We got the poor devil out of that scrape! Yes, yes, yes! Always very happy to do a kindness to a fellow creature! I live by assisting folks in distress. Yes, yes, yes! oh yes! remember very well. Pray be seated!”

Monsieur de Vitray now informed him, that it was my intention to go privately to England, where, as it might be dangerous to appear in my own character, I had come to him for assistance on the occasion.

“Oh yes, yes! certainly! yes, yes, yes! nothing so easy,” said the attorney. You shall be come from Messieurs Verité and Francomerce, at Nantes, bound for Hamburgh; and consigned to Messieurs Chicane and Double-touche. Yes, yes—yes, yes, yes! nothing so

easy. When do you sail? What's the cargo?"

It was now to be explained, that I was not in the precise situation that he supposed; and at length, having made him comprehend exactly what we desired, he laid his finger on the side of his nose, and exclaimed:

"Yes, yes, yes, yes! I see! I see! What you want is an ostensible object, which can be proved and substantiated to cover your purposes of a different nature. Good! very good! That can be managed too, I should suppose. Holoa, Marguerite! Go and tell Monsieur Lalande, that I want to speak with him as soon as possible. This Monsieur Lalande," he continued, while his dirty maid was gone upon the errand he had given her in charge—"This Monsieur Lalande is one of our best merchants here in Calais; and on account of *certain little pieces of information* which, from time to time, he has furnished to the English Council of State, he is suffered to carry on *certain little branches of trade* with London, which are forbidden to French merchants."

“ But how shall I be sure,” I demanded, “ that one of these little pieces of information, which he may think necessary to communicate to the Government of the Rebel Parliament, may not be that I am in London, if they choose to arrest me as a suspicious person ?”

“ No, no, no, no !” replied the man of laws, “ he knows better than that. He shall give good security to your friend, Monsieur de Vitray, here, that you run no danger from either the affairs with which he may entrust you, or from any information he may give.”

“ Such security I shall require to the amount of two thousand louis,” rejoined Monsieur de Vitray, “ guaranteeing my young friend’s safety, as far as this Monsieur Lalande is concerned ; for though there is not a nation upon the face of the earth, that can produce such a multitude of honourable, high-spirited, and noble-minded men, as the French people—though delicacy of sentiment, nicety of feeling, and inviolable adherence to their word, may be said to be the true character of Frenchmen ; and though no Frenchman, whose blood is pure

and unmixed, would, for any temptation—no, not for the empire of the Cæsars—commit a base or dishonourable action, we cannot be always so clear of a man's true origin as to trust the safety of a friend in his hands, without some better assurance of his virtue than merely his *name* being French."

"It is as well," he added, in a whisper to me, "to take the security he offers, for though, Heaven knows, it would be very difficult to prove any thing against them if they were to betray us, yet I would certainly pursue the affair; and for the honour of Frenchmen, which by the way is a better security than all their bonds, they would not like to have any dirty business brought before their countrymen."

I felt not a little obliged by the ingenuity with which Monsieur de Vitray modified his prejudices, to agree with his anxiety for my welfare; and, soon after he had done speaking, Monsieur Lalande himself was ushered in. His countenance was not peculiarly prepossessing, but he readily undertook to do that which was required; and, on the moderate considera-

tion of ten louis-d'ors, he furnished me with a letter to his agent in London, ordering I do not know how many hundred pairs of silk stockings, according to sample, and leaving me to discuss with him "*The affair of the aqua vitæ*," of which I knew not one word.

On begging to be enlightened on this subject, the worthy merchant replied, with a grin, that the words he had used would commit me to nothing but a glass of strong waters, which he had never yet known disagreeable to an Englishman. The term was evidently a conventional one between the merchant and his agent; and—satisfied with the bond he gave, neither directly nor indirectly to afford information of my going, to any other person whatsoever—I paid him his money. I then obtained from the attorney certain necessary passes and forms for quitting the French and entering the English ports, whether real or forged I know not; and having satisfied him also, and his portress, I took my leave with Monsieur de Vitray, and returned to the auberge *du cerf blanc*, where we had alighted.

The next morning, as early as possible, I procured for myself and my Page two decent suits of black, which I had not before had time to buy. My horses and equipage of every kind that I could part with, I sold, and did not lose much, considering the circumstances in which I was placed. I caused my long hair to be cut off, shaved away my mostachoes and beard, changed my hat for the most steeple-crowned beaver I could find ; and, having given little Ball-o'-fire many a lesson in regard to his demeanour, by which he profited far more than I expected, I prepared to seek a ship to convey me across that fortunate channel which separates England from the rest of Europe.

A fishing-boat was the only means that presented itself ; but the sea was calm, and the weather promising ; and having taken leave of the kind companion of my last journey, who assured me, as we parted, that I should never be happy till I returned to France, which, beyond all doubt, was the abode of happiness and the garden of delight ; I got down to the

port, and having made my bargain with the fisherman, was soon bounding over the sunshiny waves towards my native land once more.

My name was now changed to Master Harvey. Little Ball-o'-fire, all enjoyment at the idea of cheating the Roundheads, was Dick, my boy ; and never did I see a lad so rapidly take up the part he was to act, and go through every turn of it, without overcharging it in the least. Neither he nor I were very well fitted to act as Puritans ; but there existed, at that time, a large class between them and the Cavaliers, consisting of staid, thoughtful, money-making people. One of this body I was calculated to represent with little difficulty. The events which had lately passed, had left traces sufficiently deep behind them, to take off any of the youthful swagger which might have stamped me as a cavalier ; and the penury of my finances imposed upon me the cautious economy, which was a part of the character I proposed to assume. Thus the matter was rendered easy to me ; and, in regard to the boy, he seemed to

conceive his part at once, and to feel a pleasure in performing it to the life. The natural brevity of speech, which I have before remarked, was no small advantage to him, as it was not likely to lead him into any unwary disclosures, and the early knowledge of the world's worst side, which he had acquired by the wandering and dangerous existence he had led, kept him always on his guard against the curiosity of others.

Thus prepared, after a long but easy sail, we landed at Folkestone, intending to pursue our journey to London. The only difficulty that awaited us here, was found in procuring horses. At length, however, two ugly monsters as ever were seen were produced, for which an enormous price was asked; but as it neither suited my finances, nor the character I wished to play, to disburse so much money on so bad a bargain, I agreed with a carrier, who was setting out the same day for Canterbury, to take my boy and myself on the front of his cart. As we drove slowly away, I heard one of the inn-door loiterers ask the worthy

hostler, who had recommended strongly the horses I had declined, "Know ye who they be, Bill?"

"Not I," answered the waterer of horses. Some damned shabby London hosier, I suppose, and his shopboy. One of those that have neither spirit to cant like a Puritan, nor swear like a Cavalier."

This character, which, on ordinary occasions, would not have sounded very flattering in my ears, now gave me no displeasure. My only fear indeed was, that it might call forth some sally from little Ball-o'-fire, which would not be exactly in harmony with our appearance; but on looking down at his face, I saw that he was sitting with the most demure aspect in the world, while a slight twinkle in the corner of his eye betrayed to me, and me alone, that he had heard what passed, and amused himself with the hostler's compliment.

At Canterbury I found a better store of steeds, and suited myself well at half the price which had been demanded for the bony mountains we had refused at Folkestone. I here also

laid in a number of samples of silks and dimities, as I calculated upon passing myself for a trader; and after spending an undisturbed night at the inn, I set out early the following day for London. A long and hard day's riding brought me to the great city, without any accident or occurrence worthy of notice; and under the direction of my little Page, who seemed to know every street and alley that it contained, I made my way to a small, neat inn in the ward of Cheap, nearly opposite the spot where I found one of the old crosses formerly stood, which had been pulled down by the Puritans. The boy had chosen excellently well, and perfectly in harmony with my assumed character. The house was the resort of country manufacturers and traders, and combined with cleanness and quiet, comfort and frugality. As it was now approaching towards night, I was shown to a neat small chamber, with a truckle-bed for the boy, by the side of the larger one. The innholder himself, who had led me thither, then demanded and received my orders for refreshment, and left me to contemplate my situation,

as I now stood, for the first time, in the capital of my native land, without one friend on earth to whom I could apply, and surrounded on every side by difficulties and dangers.

CHAPTER VII.

OF all kinds of solitude, there is none like the solitude of a great town—so utterly desert, as far as human sympathies go. A great town is like an immense Eastern bazaar, where men buy and sell, and are bought and sold; and without one has some merchantable quality or commodity, or some of the many kinds of coin with which the trade in human relationships is carried on, he is like a beggar in the market-place, and it must be all sterile as the plains of Arabia Petræa.

I had nothing to sell; I could be of assistance to no one; I came not to barter my courage, or my talents, or my strength, or my labour, in raising any man to power, or wealth,

or fame ; and, on the other hand—of influence, interest, or riches, I had but little or none to pay any human thing I might buy to serve me myself. I knew no one in all the vast mass of buildings that rose in awful murkiness around me ; there was not one heart in the whole dark hive that beat in sympathy with mine ; and as I gazed from the high window of my chamber, out upon the sea of human dwellings that stretched on every side, I felt more lonely than ever I had done before in my existence.

The sun was setting rapidly in London, and pouring through the foul and smoky air a red and lurid glare : — oh, how unlike the bright effulgence of his decline in the calm country ! It was like the purest and the best gifts of heaven, that we so frequently see darkened and perverted by the passions and the vices of the earthly beings on which they are bestowed. High up as I was, I caught the sinking beams as they streamed through the plague-loaded air ; but down in the streets below, darkness had asserted her right of reign, and single lanthorns began to creep along the street, lighting the

careful burghers from the dens of their daily toil, either to their evening meal or to some dwelling detached from their shops. There was something both painful and degrading in the sight—I know not well what. Viewing them separately—distinct from the great fact of society, and all the sublime consequences that result from the mighty association of human intellects;—viewing them, too, with perhaps somewhat of a jaundiced eye, the race of beings that were there crawling about seemed so near related to the insect,—so wormlike in their habits and their state of existence, that I shrank from the idea of partaking the same nature, and, sick at heart, I turned away.

The worthy host was entering at that moment with the supper I had ordered, more indeed for the boy than myself; and he, seeing me look somewhat pale, pressed me to my meal in a friendly tone, that took off the first layer of misanthropy that was gathering round my heart. He lamented deeply, as he set upon the table some cold roast beef, that I had not arrived in time to partake of it warm, when he had placed

it on his guest-table that day—as fine a sirloin as ever was cut ! However, it was well nigh as good cold, he said ; and as for the plum-porridge that accompanied it, it would do the heart of any man good, though he were as tired as if he had ridden to Coventry.

Little Ball-o'-fire found the viands very satisfactory ; and, in truth, a flagon of excellent wine reconciled me greatly, in spite of myself, to being of the same race as the London burghers. As I wanted information also concerning my brother, I desired the host to sit down, and take his share of the tankard—an invitation host never yet refused ; and drawing his chair near the fire, which had been kindled for the evening, he sat nearly opposite to me, and did justice to his own wine, seasoning it with several jests and several tales, which brought him occasionally near the subject on which I required intelligence. He spoke cautiously however, and seemed anxious to discover the political feelings of his guest, before he committed himself by any observations on the state of the country. I doubted not, nevertheless—from a certain

laborious effort which he made to bring in a text from the bible, or some scriptural expression sufficiently misapplied,—that the good innholder was not originally of the true blue Presbyterian stuff, which in general formed the materials of the inhabitants of the city. On this supposition I ventured, on one occasion, to call the Parliamentary party, Roundheads, as if by accident, at which word mine host had nearly started from his seat; and laying his finger on his lips, looked timidly round, uttering a long “Whew!”

I affected to be surprised at his emotion, and apologized for using a wrong word, saying that I had been so long abroad occupied in my trade, that I did not rightly know the names by which the parties were designated in England.

“Then I’ll tell you what, young gentleman,” replied the host: “take an old fox’s advice, and while you are in London, never mention the word roundhead, or prick-ear, or rebel, any more than you would talk of a rope in the house of a man who has been hanged. But sigh if you can, and look solemn; and speak of the blessed league and covenant, and say a few

words about God-fearing folk ; and if you have any scripture phrases, in heaven's name make use of them right or wrong. So shall you pass through this city with good report, and may-be escape the pillory."

" Why, my good friend," I replied, " I do not intend to do any thing to deserve the pillory, and therefore trust to escape it ; but as I may fall into other sins, through ignorance, I prithee tell me what has been passing here during the last day or two, that I may know who are good men and who are not. Lords Goring and Capel—how are they held now ?"

" Hush, hush !" cried the host ; " mention not the names of such black malignants : the name of Satan himself would be more savoury to the nostrils of the saints. They are both of them, thank God, safely housed at Windsor, there to await judgment."

It was evident enough, that the good landlord seasoned his mention of the Cavaliers with epithets very different from those which he would have bestowed, had his heart been free ; and I proceeded to ask him what had become of Lord Goring's Kentish companions.

“ Some in prison—some in prison, alack !” replied the host ; “ and some wandering about the country. But I must be bustling, I must be bustling,” he continued, evidently alarmed at the turn which the conversation had taken. “ Here, Jack, Will, carry away Master—”

“ Harvey,” I said, as he paused for the name.

“ Ay, ay, true,” Master Harvey’s supper. “ Will, you dog ! make haste ;” and so saying, the worthy innkeeper took his leave, and left me to seek repose.

I was too much fatigued, and too anxious, to be able to sleep soundly ; and after a night of restless and troublous dreams, I rose to consider what course I ought to pursue, to gain tidings of my brother. Up to that moment I had formed no plan for my farther conduct. To reach London and seek for Frank, as best I might, had been my determination, thinking that some means of prosecuting that search would naturally occur to me ; but now, the question of how to carry it on, where to begin, or in what manner to proceed, puzzled me completely ;

and for near half an hour, I continued walking up and down my little chamber, without coming to any conclusion. At length, with little Ball-o'-fire for my guide, I issued forth into the street, in order to proceed to the agent of Monsieur Lalande, one Hezekiah Manuel, in Bucklersbury.

Every thing was already in activity and confusion; and my eyes were dazzled, and my ears deafened, with the various sights, sounds, and cries of the streets. There was business and importance too in the air of every one; and though, God knows, I had anxieties enough at heart—amongst the number of grave and thoughtful faces that I encountered, some with eyes fixed upon the stones, some with lips speaking to themselves, some looking straightforward, yet seeing nothing but the object of their own thoughts, and running over every thing in their way—I felt as if I was the only really idle person there.

After walking along the great thoroughfare for some way, we turned through one or two narrower streets; and on inquiring for Heze-

kiah Manuel, were directed to a tall gloomy house, with no signs whatever of activity or business in its aspect. As we approached, a single individual came forth, leaving a door, which swung with a weight and pully, to close itself behind him. In this operation, however, we interrupted it; and going in, found ourselves in the entry of a long warehouse, up the dim extent of which we could see several figures of porters and warehousemen moving about in silence and semi-obscurity.

On our right hand a considerable space had been taken off the warehouse, for what were apparently counting-houses. These were separated from the rest of the building by thick partitions of wood, with here and there a high window, looking up the long perspective of the ware-rooms. A door also, with some effaced inscription, probably purporting that there stood the office, appeared in the wood-work; and thither we directed our steps, knocking first, to obtain permission to enter. A voice shouted to us to come in; and a moment afterwards, we stood in a dull small room, in which

were two individuals, one of whom I concluded to be the person I wanted.

There was no great difficulty in distinguishing the trader. His whole appearance at once proclaimed him ; but the other individual was not so easily recognized. He was at the time I entered, leaning with his right arm upon a high desk, and holding his sheathed sword in his left hand, with an air of easy freedom. His figure was fine and manly, and his countenance noble, but stern and dark. His dress was that of an officer of high rank ; and yet there was a scrupulous simplicity about it, which went beyond that of the most puritanic of his party. The eyes of both the trader and his companion were fixed upon the door, with something of expectation in them ; and as I entered, the exclamation of “ It is not he yet,” broke from both the strangers at once.

It was not at all my desire to come in collision with any part of the Parliamentary army ; and therefore advancing at once to the merchant, I presented him the letter from his correspondent at Calais, telling him at the same

time, that as I saw he was busy, I would come back again the following day. He twisted open the letter, however, without answering me, and read the contents.

“Oh, very well ! very well ! young man,” he said, when he saw what it contained. “To-morrow will do. Come about noon. A youth from France,” he continued, turning to his companion. “From Lalande, you know, Master Henry, who gives us such good intelligence. But there seems nothing at present.”

By the time he had finished his sentence, I was out of the room ; and closing the door behind me, was issuing forth into the street, when I was suddenly called back. “Young man ! Master What’s-ycur-name !” shouted the merchant. “A word with you ! a word with you, if you please.”

“I turned accordingly, not particularly pleased with the recall ; and he led the way back to the inner room, where I found his companion seated at a table, and apparently waiting my return. He had Lalande’s letter in his hand ; and as I entered, politely pointed

to a seat. "Sit down, Master Harvey!" he said, in a fine deep voice, running his eye over the letter for my name. "Sit down and answer me a few questions, which I wish resolved concerning the state of France. You are an Englishman, I presume, by your name?" I bowed. "Probably one of the Harveys of Sandwich?" he continued.

"We are from the same origin," I replied; "but I was born in Devonshire."

"Have you been long in France?" he proceeded, rather in a tone of magisterial examination, which did not particularly put me at my ease.

"Some time," I answered, restricting my rejoinders to as few words as possible.

"When did you arrive, and where did you land?" he next demanded.

"I came to England the day before yesterday," I replied, "and landed at Folkestone; from thence proceeded to Canterbury with a carrier, and thence rode to London."

"Good!" said the examiner, "good; and what may be your business or employment?"

“ I am at present a traveller,” I replied, with rather a double meaning to my words, “ and am glad to carry commissions for any good house.”

“ When go you back to France ?” demanded the officer thoughtfully.

“ As soon,” I replied, “ as I can finish my business here.”

“ Well then,” said the other, “ I will trust you perchance with a commission, when you go thither, which if you execute faithfully and well, you shall have cause to be satisfied. But hark,” he added, as the swinging of the outer door made itself heard. “ Get you into that inner chamber—I will speak with you more in a few minutes. Close the door !”

As he spoke I arose, and turned towards the inner door, to which he pointed ; and as I did so, some one dressed also as a Parliamentary officer, entered by the opposite one. I passed out so rapidly, however, that I could neither myself see who it was that entered, nor could be seen by him with any distinctness. Little Ball-o'-fire, who was behind me, had a better

glance ; and we had scarcely entered the room, when he whispered in my ear, that the new comer was the very man who had commanded the soldiers at Masterton House. The first words that were uttered in the other chamber, immediately confirmed this piece of news ; and I found that I might congratulate myself on having escaped the friendly glance of my old acquaintance, Master Walter Dixon, by a single moment. I proceeded as far as I could from the door, which little Ball-o'-fire had certainly pushed to, but had not completely closed, instigated by a curiosity, I believe, of which he had his full share. From the distance at which I sat, only a small part of what was said reached my ears ; but the boy, notwithstanding several signs I made him to desist, continued to listen, and afterwards repeated to me nearly all that passed.

“ Give you good morrow, Master Ireton,” said the well-known tones of Walter Dixon. “ Give you good morrow, Master Manuel ; but methinks it would be better for you to avoid the room, while I speak with General Ireton.”

“Not in the least,” replied the person who had just been speaking to me, and whom I now found to be the well known, and since more famous Ireton. “Not in the least ! Stay Master Manuel. I shall entreat you, Master Dixon, to keep to general terms, for reasons best known to myself. All that may pass between you and me, can be talked of in such a manner as to commit no one.”

“With all my heart !” rejoined Walter Dixon. “But it is to be remembered too, that my business is to be spoken of, as well as yours. However, I care not ; great things are seldom arranged by private conversations ; and little can be made of any thing I can say.”

“Well, Sir,” rejoined Ireton, “the only question between us, and for which I have waited you here near an hour, is whether you will, or will not, undertake to do what was proposed to you by the council of agitators.”

“Major-General Ireton,” answered Walter Dixon, “you speak as if I were to be at your beck at the slightest word ; and that when you

write to me from Essex, saying meet me at such an hour and such a place, I were to leave all other necessary business to do your bidding. Such however cannot be the case; I have come out of good-will to meet you, as soon as I could conveniently; and I have to reply, that if you will ensure me the possession of the estates so often held out to me as the reward for my good services, and so often refused when the services were performed—if you will ensure them to me, I will undertake what you propose; but if not, you must seek some other man.”

“ Sir, how can I ensure them to you,” demanded Ireton, “ when I have but one voice out of many ?”

“ This is all very specious, Master Ireton,” rejoined the other, “ but I have it from the best authority, that you were chiefly the person to oppose their grant to me, notwithstanding the good service I had rendered in staying Masterton’s regiment from joining Goring, till Fairfax beat him.”

“ We had no excuse, Sir, for sequestrating

the estates," replied Ireton, "and therefore I opposed their being granted to any one, but the lady who possessed them."

"No excuse, Sir!" echoed Walter Dixon, in an angry tone. "What, when she received and maintained at her house one of the bitterest malignants of the time; and kept his whole regiment quartered down in the village for five days?"

"How could she help it?" demanded Ireton. "What power had she to resist his stay? where was her force to expel the cavaliers he brought?"

"Pshaw! pshaw! Master Ireton," answered the other. "The fair dame of Penford-bourne would have lost her lands long ago, had she been less fair. But now, man—now that she is gone, no one knows whither; now that her malignancy is as clear and evident as day-light, or your own republicanism, what reason, in justice or in policy, can be given for not granting me the estates? Am I not her cousin, her next of kin?"

"Ay, but her husband!" said Ireton; "you

forget her husband, Sir. The estates are his in reversion, and not yours. I know what you would say—that he is a malignant, and a worshipper of the beast, and so forth—this Sir Andrew Fleming. But between you and me, such language must not be talked. Let him worship what beast he will, it matters little to the State. Against the State he has never drawn his sword; and more, he is protected by Mazarin, with whom there is good hope of a treaty, which will take the sting out of the young serpent, that is now riding the seas.”

“So! so! that chimes well with what I heard before,” replied the other; “and so, while Ireton, and Cromwell, and Harrison, are raising up their heads from nothing, and riding in their coaches, I, as good a man as any of them, am to be denied the first and only thing I ask, because a foul, papistical, malignant is protected by one of the scarlet brotherhood of Rome! Fie, Master Ireton—fie, this is not as it should be; and it must be mended too. It would seem as if that man’s life were destined to be my plague. Why! how did he escape the

fever of which his hypocritical friend Du Tillet died, in the spring tide? But this must be amended! Major-General Ireton, I will be a whistle for no man's mouth, to call his dogs when he wants them. I will not undertake what your agitators require; I will not go to the fool Parliament, and—”

“Hush! hush! hush!” cried the others, and then followed a conversation in a lower key, which was nearly lost, except an occasional phrase spoken louder for the sake of emphasis. Thus I heard the words—

“A thousand pound paid you down now by Manuel here.”—“’Tis a temptation,” answered the other, “but it will not do—I am for France.” Then followed something more, to which Dixon replied, “No, no, no! Why waste your money on me?—Pride will do it for pure zeal. No, no, I will have all or nothing.—The day may come, when you will have no excuse to refuse me; and then if you do refuse me—why, so be it! Now farewell. But whisper a word of the business in good Colonel Pride’s ear, and he will do all you can desire. Fare-

well ! Manuel, do not forget to see me to-night."

"Whither is he gone, now?" said the voice of the merchant. "I know not," answered Ireton, carelessly. "Perhaps to betray our secrets to the Parliament: if he do that, he shall have short distance, and a volley—Perhaps to murder this Sir Andrew Fleming: if he do that, pray God Mazarin hang him ! He is no small villain that, I tell thee, Hezekiah Manuel ; and I fear much we must give him the estates he covets, though they rightfully belong to a far better man than himself. 'Tis a great pity, that in purifying the State, and lopping away all the monstrous anomalies with which the vices and follies of men have corrupted the only pure and simple form of government, we are obliged to work with such tools as that. Yet what can we do ? our enemies use the like against us. If they be hypocrites, we must be hypocrites, and outdo them in hypocrisy. If they employ knaves, we must employ knaves, but make ours the more cunning knavery ; and woe be to him alone, whose object in doing so

is bad ! The end sanctifies the means ; but if the end be bad, the means damn him who employs them. That man, Dixon, thinks I do not know him ; but I do. He is what may be called a blunt hypocrite, and half his rudeness is affected to cover the cunning of his heart. You heard of that late business of his, and the escape of his prisoner. Oh, how he lamented the chance !—after he had been the denouncer of the malignant—the mover of his arrest—to lose him, when his condemnation and the sequestration of the estates was sure ! Such was his talk ; but if it was not all a cunning device, deeply connected with his longings for the other estates, I am deceived. I will tell you what must be done at present ; and you, Manuel, must seek me out the man—

“ But you forget,” said the merchant, “ the young man in the inner room ; he must have heard all—”

“ I did not forget him,” replied Ireton ; “ but the door is shut, and he could make nothing of what has passed, even if he did hear,

especially if he be newly come to London. Call him forth, however, and we shall see."

Little Ball-o'-fire had, as I have said, left a small clink of the door open, when he followed me into the room ; but as Ireton spoke the last words he pushed it to, almost imperceptibly, and then sprang to my side, where I sat at the farther end of the apartment, looking out of a narrow window, into a small paved court, where two happy children were playing in the gutter, forming a strange contrast in their innocent gambols, with the dark and knavish words that were continually poured into my ear from the other side.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Now ! Master Harvey, now, come out, if you please, and speak with the General,” said the trader, opening the door of the room in which I had been placed. I did as he desired, and re-assumed the seat which I had formerly occupied opposite to Ireton, who fixed on me his keen and penetrating glance, as if he fain would have read the truth in my heart, before he endeavoured to gain it from my lips.

“ So, Sir !” he said, when I was seated, “ may I ask you sincerely, if you have not heard all that passed, between myself and a person just gone ?”

“ The greater part of it,” I replied calmly ; for I felt very sure that denial would be in

vain, and but perhaps involve me in deeper suspicions.

“ Boldly answered !” rejoined Ireton ; “ and I hold you not the worse for answering boldly, Master Harvey. Yet a little farther, if you please ; what did you make of what you heard ?”

“ Simply,” I replied, making use of what commercial terms I had at command, “ simply that the house you wanted to deal with, pretend to too high commission ; that you offered what was reasonable, but they would not come to terms.”

The Parliamentary looked at me a moment with a grim smile. “ Right !—right !—right !” he repeated, thoughtfully ; “ they do pretend to too high a commission ! Think you he understands the full meaning of his words, Manuel ?” he demanded, turning to the merchant who stood beside him.

“ No, no !” replied the other ; “ he uses them but as common commercial terms. Explain to his worship, Master Harvey, what—”

“ It skills not ! it skills not !” interrupted Ireton, “ to waste time upon it ; he can make

nothing of it. Tell me, young Sir, as you crossed from France to England, heard you aught of young Charles Stuart, calling himself Prince of Wales ?”

I felt my cheek burn with indignation, and saw the hand of little Ball-o'-fire, who stood beside me, playing with the hilt of his dagger, with rather an ominous degree of familiarity. I answered as briefly as possible, however, that I had come over in an open boat, and had been too full of other thoughts, to attend to any political matters whatever.

“ Good !” answered Ireton, “ good ! thou hast done wisely ; for such spirits as thine are not fitted to mingle in the hard things of policy. Thou sayest thou art going back to France soon, wilt thou be the bearer of a letter thither for me, for which thou shalt be well rewarded ?”

“ Good Sir,” I replied, “ I am no letter-carrier ; and I would unwillingly mix myself with any thing out of my sphere. If it be a commission to any mercantile house, I will willingly charge myself with it, at the ordinary

rate of such things; but if it be a matter of politics, I tell you freely, I will none of it."

"Thou art wise and cautious," answered Ireton; "but that with which I would charge thee, is neither commercial nor political. It is but the letter of one friend to another, seeking to render him a service; thus far I may tell thee. Many years gone, I should have lost my life at sea, had not a man, who was in the same ship with me, a man whom I had never seen before, saved my life at the imminent peril of his own. Now, though I value life as little as any man that ever yet was born, such a service as that which I received was not to be forgotten, and through life my eye has never been off him who rendered it. Since those days, a thousand changes have come over the world, like the rolling variations of the year; and that which was then but a small seed cast casually into the ground, has now risen to a great tree, and is ready to bear fruit. In a word, I have it now in my power, not to repay the debt of life—that I can never repay—but to render in return, a great for a greater service; and I

would employ a person totally unconnected with any of the parties that tear this poor distracted land, to seek out the man I want, and give into his own hand when he is alone—for he is accompanied frequently by those whose interests are opposed to his, and whose persuasions may lead him into folly—to give into his hand a letter containing tidings which may serve him, and directions which may bring him to high fortune. Wilt thou undertake this charge, young man ?”

The republican spoke slowly and earnestly ; and there was in his whole manner a degree of noble and manly feeling, that convinced me of his sincerity.

“ Without doubting you, Sir,” I replied, “ though these are days of doubt, I will undertake that with which you charge me. I feel sure that you would not, after what you have said, give into my hands any paper which, if found upon me, might compromise me with any party.”

“ Rest sure of that,” replied Ireton. “ Deceivers I would willingly deceive. Against

hypocrites one must use hypocrisy ; but it were a foolish and sinful economy to cheat, when the business may be done by plain dealing. Now, tell me where thou lodgest, and the letter shall be sent to thee, with wherewithal to bear the expenses thou mayest incur."

"I lodge at present," I replied, "at the Pack-horse in West Cheap ; but, I pray you, let not your communication be long delayed, for I must quit this place as soon as my affairs be finished."

"Before night thou shalt hear more," replied Ireton. But let me warn thee, youth. Thou hast heard my name and station ; mention no word thereof to any man whatsoever ; and so tutor thy boy here—who, to say sooth, looks more like some ruffling cavalier's foot-page, than a sober trader's boy—so tutor his tongue, that he come not to lose his ears, by blabbing that he has seen Master Ireton in London, when all the world thought him afar off."

I willingly promised silence myself, and warranted the discretion of my boy ; and telling Master Hezekiah Manuel that I should come

back the next day, to speak about the silk stockings, (which engagement, however, I never intended to keep,) I made my way out into the street, not a little pleased to have escaped so easily from the dangerous situation in which I had been placed.

My next consideration was, how most readily to change the goldsmith's bills which I had brought with me from Masterton House, into money. The person on whom they were drawn in London was one of the oldest tradesmen of my family ; but never having seen me, he could not detect me under my assumed name, even if I presented the bills myself. This I ultimately resolved to do, thinking that it was not at all unlikely, that a person who had always taken an interest in the affairs of my family, and whose prosperity had been greatly brought about by my father's patronage, might have acquired some information of his patron's eldest son, whose arrest must, in all probability, have reached his ears. At the inn, I accordingly made the bills payable to Master George Harvey ; and still guided by my boy, set out once more

for Milk-street, where the goldsmith lived, close by the little church of St. Mary Magdalene. He was well known, and easily found ; but on inquiring for him in his shop, one of the men who was carefully rolling up some silver dishes in leathern skins, informed me that Master Wilson had just stepped forth, but would be back shortly.

I paused for a moment in the shop ; but as I saw that the man viewed me with a suspicious eye, and swept the counter of one or two small articles of jewellery that lay thereon, I told him with somewhat of a smile, that I would return in half an hour ; and, walking out, I entered the little church hard by, the door of which stood open. I passed away the time in reading the monumental inscriptions that graced the aisle, and moralizing upon the tombstones of many a worthy merchant and fat alderman — Thomas Skinners, and Gerard Gores, and Thomas Hawkines innumerable ; while, set down fair in order, came an account of all the copious posterity of sons and daughters which each had left in his generation. But my mind was little

in the business ; and while my eyes were busy upon the tombs of the defunct burghers, and an occasional comment on their state or fate crossed my thoughts, another train of ideas proceeded slowly in my brain, the subject of which was Walter Dixon, and his conversation with the republican general.

It were of little use to record all the steps by which I arrived at conclusions on the matter ; it is sufficient that from all I had heard I gained a clearer insight into the late events of my life, than I had hitherto possessed. I shall not attempt to puzzle any one who may read these pages, by recording the false suppositions which mingled themselves with the more correct ones that I formed ; but those conclusions which proved afterwards to be just, were as follows : — Walter Dixon, evidently the villain I had supposed him from the first, had been guided all through his conduct to my brother and myself, from our first meeting him at Amesbury, by the purpose of preventing our junction with Lord Goring. The reward he proposed to himself, and which probably had

been held out to him by some of the leaders of more influence than himself, was the estates of Lady Eleanor Fleming; and, beyond doubt, his scheme was cunningly devised both for making her the means of staying my brother on his march, and for bringing her, by our very stay at her dwelling, within the list of malignants, as they were called, whose property was confiscated every day for the use of some knave like himself. Gabriel Jones had evidently been merely his agent and spy, bribed perhaps by the prospect of sharing the spoil; and by his directions, undoubtedly, Walter Dixon had followed us from Exeter to Amesbury. From all that had passed, I doubted not that the Parliamentarian had been instigated to denounce my brother, as projecting new schemes of revolt, by Lady Eleanor herself, for the purpose of breaking off his marriage with Emily. This idea was familiar with my mind before, and I thence derived an assurance of my brother's safety, as far as his life went — for I felt sure that her love for him was too great to suffer her to take such steps, without having pre-

viously ascertained his security. Nevertheless, to find him was still a great object with me ; for although, I confess, after all that had happened, I despaired of detaching him from the pursuit of his criminal passion for Lady Eleanor, I could not be satisfied till I had made myself sure of his personal safety. Of course, the more selfish desire of obtaining his renunciation of Emily's hand had its share in my motives ; but fraternal affection, notwithstanding all he had done to shake it, — notwithstanding that esteem and respect were gone, — still made me dream of saving him from the ruin he had brought upon himself, even when the hope of doing so was almost extinguished.

Such was the subject of my ruminations, while I remained in the church of St. Mary Magdalene in Milk-street ; and they sufficed to occupy fully more time than I had intended to consume in that place. At length, greatly to the relief of little Ball-o'-fire, who was tired by this time of old monuments and his own thoughts, I once more left the church, and entered the shop of the goldsmith, where I found

the worthy merchant himself. He took the bills as a matter of course, and glanced his eye over them.

“ Ay !” cried he, as he read the names :—
“ Master Harry Masterton — and where is he at present, pray, young gentleman ? — where is the indorser ?

“ He was in France when last I left him,” I replied. “ Pray, where is his brother ? Can you inform me, as I have business to transact with him ?”

“ Not I—not I ! I know nothing of him !” answered the goldsmith hastily, as he counted out the money : “ not I—not I ! How should I know any thing of him ? I heard of his being taken as a malignant, and the old lord shot—but I know nothing at all !”

Ever and anon as the old man spoke, he raised his eyes to my face with a sort of furtive yet inquiring glance ; and, when he had counted out the money, put it in a canvass bag, marked, numbered, and sealed it, he laid his hand thereon, saying :—

“ You seem tired, young gentleman. If

you will come in with me, you shall taste a cup of nappy ale as ever was brewed in the ward of Cripplegate. Will you come in?"

As I could not help suspecting, though I cannot well tell why, that the old goldsmith knew more of my brother than he chose to proclaim to all the world, I did not refuse his invitation; and mounting a dark and narrow stair, which led direct into one side of his shop, he conducted me to a small neat chamber above, round which stood many a rare curiosity from foreign lands, and many a massive piece of plate. He there bade me sit down; and running down again himself with the activity of a squirrel, he brought up, in two or three minutes, a foaming tankard, and a crystal drinking-cup, and then carefully closed the door.

There was a good deal of agitation in his manner, as he set the things he brought down on the table; and when he had done, he stood before me, rubbing his hands in visible perturbation. "I don't know, young gentleman—I don't know," he cried, "God forgive me—I'm not sure; but yet I cannot help thinking, you

are very like your Lady Mother—very like, indeed; a strong resemblance, as I term it—a strong resemblance. I remember very well, when I took her marriage jewels—a pretty creature she was, oh dear!—And you are like your brother too; but not so like him, as like your Lady Mother.”

“And pray when did you see my brother, Master Wilson?” I demanded, finding the subject opened so unexpectedly. “And where is he, pray?”

“Oh ’tis but two nights since, I saw him, Sir,” replied the old man, “when I took him all the money I could raise upon the jewels and plate. But I would not speak about it before the boys in the shop, for the world; for I might get myself into trouble, you know.”

“I know nothing, my good Master Wilson,” I replied; “but come to you for information. I have neither seen, nor heard of my brother since his arrest.”

“Oh gracious! then I have a long story to tell,” answered the goldsmith. But take a cup of ale, Sir, take a cup of ale, while I run down

and lock up the money-drawer. The lads are honest enough, doubtless; but I never love to put temptation in folk's way—safe bind safe find, is a good proverb. Take a cup of ale, Sir, I will be back directly. I never leave it open, never; but I was so flustered to see you, Sir, and to get you up here, that I forgot it till this blessed minute.”

The old man came back in a few moments, less flustered, as he called it, than he went; and he began and continued a long story, which I am sorry my memory does not serve sufficiently to repeat in his own words. The substance however was, that he had been sent for late, about four days before, to speak with a gentleman in Westminster; and though he took boat at the nearest stairs, it was dark before he landed at Whitehall. Following the direction that had been given, he came to a house, where being brought to a splendid lodging, he found a gentleman sitting in deep mourning, with the most beautiful lady that ever his eyes beheld. The gentleman proved to be my brother; and, forced to explain his circumstances to the

worthy goldsmith, he told him that he had been arrested as an obdurate malignant, and brought to London ; but that he owed his deliverance solely to the courage and exertions of the lady he saw. He then placed in the old man's hands a large quantity of jewels and plate, and desired him to convert it with all speed into bills of exchange upon Paris. Various interviews took place ; for, as Master Wilson said, money was scarcely to be had in the city ; trade was nearly ruined with the civil dissensions of the times, and he could not procure for the articles intrusted to him, any thing like their real value. He did not choose therefore to act on his own responsibility, and was more than once obliged to consult Frank on his conduct. The matter, however, was at length finally settled ; and the amount of nearly twenty thousand pounds was obtained and transmitted to my brother in bills of exchange.

Whose were the jewels and plate, the old man could not say ; but he assured me, that Frank was living apparently at ease, and under little apprehension of being again arrested,

although he did not venture out of his dwelling while in London. He had set forth for Paris two days before my arrival; and, as the goldsmith had made particular inquiries, without learning that he had been retaken, he concluded that his flight from England had been uninterrupted.

In answer to some questions I put to him, he informed me that my brother had appeared very grave and sad, except when he was speaking to the lady who was always with him. "He did not tell me who she was," added the goldsmith; "and though the worthy and respected Lord your father, was good enough to commission some jewels about a month since, for a lady your brother was going to marry, oh, Master Henry Masterton! I do not think the lady I saw there was she. I fear me—I fear me, that my young Lord is going wrong. She was as beautiful as a princess, that is certain; and as gentle and as noble as could be; but somehow—I don't know what—she seemed not like his wife either."

I was silent, though I well knew who the

person was ; and I had myself felt that indescribable something, in the manners and appearance of Lady Eleanor Fleming, that had given so unfavourable an impression to the mind of the worthy goldsmith. There was something in her, too sweet, too brilliant, too fascinating. The fire of the heart and the mind was suffered to shine out so brightly, that a doubt was instantly raised, whether it would always be repressed by principle and virtue.

But it was not for me to blazon my brother's errors ; and, though the old man evidently sought to know who the lady was, he had seen so constantly by the side of Frank, I was silent. Being assured of his personal safety, I now only endeavoured to discover the means of tracing him in France ; but in regard to his course, the goldsmith could give me no information of any kind, except the address of a Jewish house in Paris, on whom the bills of exchange were drawn.

Leaving in his hands the principal part of the money which I had just received, to be invested in bills on the same house, I took with

me the sum of one hundred pounds ; and after some farther conversation of little moment, I left Master Wilson, with directions to transmit to me the bill, at my lodging in Cheap, by the name of Harvey.

On my arrival at the inn, I visited the stables, to see that my horses were well taken care of ; and there I found that some person, doubtless sent by Ireton, had been making minute inquiries concerning me, and endeavouring to ascertain exactly the road I had followed to London. As I knew, however, that every thing which they could discover, would prove my former account of my journey to be correct, as far as related to my progress from the coast to the metropolis, these investigations gave me no inquietude, and I sat down to the host's table, at the inn, somewhat reconciled to London, and more at home, amidst its mighty swarms of human beings.

CHAPTER IX.

I WAS now most anxious to quit a city where my stay could be productive of no farther good; and, in hopes of the arrival, both of the letter which Ireton had promised to send, and of the bills of exchange on Paris, I prepared to set out with the dawn of the following morning. The day went by, however, without the coming of either; and night fell, leaving me not a little impatient, under the apprehension of being detained another day. Every hour which I passed at a distance from Emily Langleigh, made me both unhappy and anxious. I had never before had any one depending solely upon me for protection and support. I had never yet had one whose whole

hopes and wishes centred in my welfare, and all the dear cares of such a situation were new and sharp upon my mind. I fancied a thousand accidents that might happen to Emily during my absence. I pictured all the anxiety she would feel till my return; and I anticipated farther delay, with a degree of irritation that it is impossible to describe.

At length, towards eight o'clock, as I was packing up my little store of gold in the valise, which served to render my small Page of about equal weight for a horse with myself; one of the Drawers ushered into my chamber a man wrapped in a long night-cloak, which being laid aside, immediately discovered to me, General Ireton. He sat down on the first vacant chair; and, drawing a small packet from his bosom, gave it into my hands.

“I have come myself, Master Harvey,” he said, “in order to charge you to great care in regard to that packet. You will find General St. Maur either in Paris or at St. Germain’s. Give it to him, with assurances of my unaltered regard; and tell him, should he speak to you

on politics, that though he may suppose me altered in my opinions, since last we met, such is not the case; and that while I steadily pursue the destruction of one man's tyranny in England, I will equally oppose the elevation of any other to the same unjust power. But though he and I differ, say to him that is no reason why he should not come over, and take advantage of an opportunity that may never return.

The name General St. Maur struck me as in some degree familiar to my ear; but at the moment I could not recall where I had heard it; and putting the packet carefully into the valise, I assured the Republican that it should be faithfully delivered to the person for whom it was intended. I made my reply as brief as possible; for I had no great delight in the society of Master Ireton, though I could not but feel some respect for the stern and uncompromising principles which he displayed in a far higher degree than any other of the Parliamentary leaders. I was anxious that he should go also, for I was every moment afraid

that something might happen to betray me ; and as generally occurs when one is desirous of another's absence, he seemed particularly inclined to stay ; sitting smoothing his band, or playing with his sword-knot, and talking with the easy, familiar, and desultory style, of a person conversing with an inferior.

He asked me a number of questions about France ; some concerning its commerce, some relating to its natural productions, some referring to the present state of its internal policy. To all I replied as best I could ; and doubtless had Ireton been well acquainted with the subject, he would soon have perceived that I was talking great nonsense. In the midst of this conversation, I heard a step coming up the stairs ; and as I foreboded, in marched Master Wilson, the goldsmith, with a lanthorn in his hand, and his eyes dazzled by the light of the room : “ I have been a long time, Master Harry Masterton,” he exclaimed, as he entered, “ I have been a long time, but—” At that moment, his eye fell upon Ireton, seated a little

to the right of the door; and I shall not easily forget the air of bewildered astonishment which filled the countenance of the poor goldsmith, as he beheld that face, which he knew full well. He said not a word; his horror and surprise were far too overpowering for that; but with one hand still stretched out, in the act of unfolding his cloak, and the other dangling with the lanthorn, his mouth wide open, and his eyes stretched to unnatural roundness, he stood gazing upon Ireton, with terror and dismay visible in every line and feature.

Ireton sat with perfect calmness, though he had started at the first sound of my real name; and I stood with no small vexation, waiting for what unpleasant thing was to come next. The first movement amongst us was made by little Ball-o'-fire, who sprang to the door, locked it, and gave me the key.

“So, Sir,” said Ireton, after a moment’s pause, “I have been deceived, and your name is not Harvey, but Masterton—”

“Oh dear! oh dear! What have I done!”

exclaimed the poor goldsmith, wringing his hands. "I have ruined him, I have, indeed! This is a terrible non plus, as I term it."

"You *have* been deceived, General Ireton," I replied to the Parliamentary, who sat eyeing me with great composure; "and my name, as you say, is *not* Harvey, but Masterton."

"Ay, and doubtless, Sir," he continued, imitating, with somewhat of a sneering tone, the reply I had made to his questions in the morning; "and doubtless you are not of the Mastertons of Kent, but of Devonshire. Probably also, Sir, you may be a traveller for a royal *house*, and the last commission entrusted to you was one from Stuart and company."

"You may spare your sneers, General Ireton," I replied. "I deceived you, as you would deceive an adversary; and no more. Accident has discovered to you who I am, and has put me in some degree in your power. It is for you to profit by that accident, as you think fit."

"And do you propose, Sir," demanded Ireton,—“which I suppose you do, by the

key you hold in your hand—to impede my exit from this chamber?”

“Not in the least,” I replied, proceeding to the door and throwing it wide open. “Not in the least! Pass freely, Sir. I believe you to be a man of honour, though an enemy; and I doubt not that you will act as a man of honour should do.”

Ireton rose, and walked towards the door; but it was only to close it again. After having done which, he resumed his seat, and waved his hand, to silence the goldsmith, who was begging and praying with piteous tones that he would not betray me. “We must have a few more words before we part, young gentleman,” he said, as soon as the other ceased. “Will you promise me to answer me truly, on your honour?”

“If I answer you at all,” I replied.

“That will do,” he rejoined; “all I desire is, that I may not have to contend with double meanings, like this morning. Are you a son of the late Lord Masterton?”

“I am,” I replied.

“ Were you not upon the eve of marrying the Lady Emily Langleigh, when you were arrested by Major-General Dixon ?” he then demanded.

“ I was not. You mistake me for my brother,” was my answer.

“ True ! true !” said Ireton, “ he must be an older man. Then you are the young gallant that escaped to France. I see it all now. What brought you, then, to London, when you were safely across the water ?”

“ To see whether I might not render some aid to my brother,” I answered, “ after having placed the Lady Emily in safety.”

“ She was never in danger,” he replied ; “ I would take good care of that. But you have heard, of course, that your brother has made his escape, without your assistance. Have you not ?”

“ I have heard it so rumoured,” I replied, afraid of committing the poor goldsmith, “ and therefore I only waited till this good man brought me the bills of exchange upon Paris,

in return for those I presented him this morning."

"And you are really and truly, without deceit, going back direct to France," demanded Ireton. "Is it so? or is not? on your honour, Master Masterton."

"On my honour, then, without I am prevented by your means," I replied, "I am going back direct, without a day's delay."

"Far be it from me to stop you," replied Ireton. "If I had found you, or your brother either, as lately you appeared in Kent, troubling the peace of England, and striving to set up a tyranny that is past, I would have had you out and shot you, as I would do a mad dog, or any other dangerous beast; but I would as soon think of taking advantage of an accidental discovery, to destroy a man who had relinquished his evil ways, though not perhaps his evil wishes, as I would think of raising my hand against my own life. Nay more, young gentleman," he added, "I will still trust you with the packet I gave you but now. The time may come when you will thank me for so

doing. May I trust to you to deliver it carefully and well, as I told you, when no one is present but the person to whom it is addressed?"

"My business certainly is not that of a letter-carrier," I replied; "but, nevertheless, you act towards me with such liberality of feeling, that I will not refuse to be the bearer, trusting, as I trusted before, that the packet contains nothing contrary to my allegiance, or to the interest of that party to which I am attached."

"Nothing, I assure you," answered Ireton; "or, as you would say, nothing, upon my honour. I must not now offer," he continued, "to Master Harry Masterton the reward for carrying that letter, which I was about to have bestowed on the humbler Master Harvey. I know you cavaliers hold it one of your points of pride to receive money for nothing but shedding blood. The days are coming, I trust, when there will be better notions of honour than can be given by a long descent. But I must go. Sleep soundly, young gentleman; and, as soon as may be, tread your way back to France, for you might meet with men amongst

us who would scruple less to betray you than I do."

As he spoke, he rose to depart; but poor Master Wilson caught him by the cloak, begging most movingly that he would not betray him either.

"Pshaw!" cried Ireton, "betray thee, man! thine own fears betray thee more than any one else can do. What could I know of thy being here, but that thou hadst come to transact some business about bills of exchange, with this young man? Keep thine own counsel, and I have nothing to betray. But mark me, Master Wilson, the less thou hast to do with malignants the better: and more — forget, as soon as thou canst, that thou hast seen me here this night; for if thou dost but breathe that I have been within the walls of London for a month past, I will take care that on some occasion thy gold pots are made to answer it."

Thus speaking, the Parliamentary General turned, and left the chamber; and, after a few words of exclamation and surprise, Master Wilson proceeded to hand over to me the bills of

exchange on Paris. He stayed but for a moment after this business was concluded, and then bidding God be with me, hastened away as fast as ever he could, heartily tired and sick, I am convinced, of having any thing to do with malignants; and forswearing all transactions for the future with any but the party in power.

As soon as all were gone, I applied myself to the farther packing of my valise, with the assistance of little Ball-o'-fire, who could not refrain from murmuring his sorrow, that I had been obliged to let so favourable an opportunity of running one of the great Parliamentary generals through the body, slip by me unemployed.

“It would have paid off long Marston Moor,” he said: and nothing I could reply would convince him, that even had such an attempt been perfectly safe, it would have been base and unjustifiable. He could see that it was dangerous, circumstanced as we were, clearly enough; but that there would be any thing wrong in killing a rebel, except when one had promised quarter, he could not comprehend at all. His

ideas of hostility were perhaps more natural, though less civilized, than my own; and he could not fancy, that when men were drawn up in battle array, was to be the only time for bloodshed and strife; and that the same individuals, separated from their companions, might meet and reciprocate acts of even courtesy and friendship. In his eyes, the whole world was as a battle-field, and his enemy was his enemy, whenever or wherever he met him. Such were the lessons he had learned in a hard and ruthless school; and finding that I could silence, but not convince him, I sent him to bed.

The following morning dawned brightly upon our departure; and, after discharging my score to the good landlord of the Pack-horse, we mounted our horses, and set out for Dover, to which town I was fain to turn my steps, from the uncertainty of procuring any passage to one of the ports of France, nearer to the dwelling of my Emily.

My journey to the coast passed over without any thing worth noting, and therefore it may be as well to say no more than that we left

London, and arrived at Dover in safety. Being now somewhat wealthier than when I had last passed on that road, I gave less attention perhaps to the sale of the horses that brought me from London than I had done in regard to those which had carried me to Calais. At all events, I sold them immediately, for a mere trifle, at the little town of Dover, though I regretted afterwards that I had done so, when I found that there was no probability of a ship sailing for Calais for several days to come.

The next morning, however, I was awoke early by the news, that a gentleman had just hired one of the small-decked vessels that frequent that port, to carry him across; and I instantly despatched the drawer, to inquire whether he was willing to give me a passage. The reply was courteous and kind, but accompanied with an injunction to make haste, as the tide was rising fast, and in twenty minutes the vessel would sail. Before I was dressed, the hirer of the boat was on board; and I was just in time to reach her side before she sailed.

My valise was instantly thrown in, and, fol-

lowed by little Ball-o'-fire, I sprang up, and reached the deck just as she began to move from the shore. What was my surprise, however, when advancing from behind the main-sheet, which was now beginning to fill, Walter Dixon himself stood before me! Whether my own face exhibited as much surprise as his, I do not know; but I do not think it could have displayed very great calmness, or very great delight at his appearance; and we both instinctively laid our hands upon our swords. He recovered himself instantly, and, after looking at me with a smile for a full minute, during which he was doubtless laying out his plan of proceeding, he said:—

“ So, Master Harry Masterton, in return for all the kind services that you have rendered me, I am to have the pleasure of carrying you to France in my vessel.”

“ Rest quite assured, General Dixon,” I replied, “ that had I known it to be yours, I should never have set foot upon its deck. Even now, were there any way of reaching the shore, I would remain no longer.”

“ And why so, good youth ?” he rejoined. You are letting your passions get the better of your judgment, Master Harry, which is rather a fault of your family, let me tell you. Ay, even you yourself have it in no small degree, though you are a lad of sense, and have as much knowledge of the world — Heaven knows where you got it !—as would serve yourself and your brother too. But why give way to your passion, and quarrel with a good conveyance because Walter Dixon shares it ?”

“ Because,” I replied, “ I should imagine that my society would be fully as disagreeable to him, as his is to me — without, indeed, he had some purpose to answer by consorting with me.”

“ I have none that I know of at present,” he replied coolly. “ Perhaps I may think of some before the day be over, and then I shall use you as far as I can, of course. In the mean time, however, be assured that your society is not at all disagreeable to me ; nor should mine be so to you, as, I think, when we can speak together alone, I shall be able to prove to you plainly.

“ I do not see how that can be,” I replied.
“ There is still much that I cannot forget.”

“ But if I show you,” he rejoined, “ that in all which has passed I could not act otherwise than I did, with any regard to reason ?”

“ Still, Sir, I cannot look with pleasure on a serpent or a tiger,” I replied, “ though it be by instinct that they injure others.”

“ Indeed !” replied he, almost laughing.
“ There we do differ certainly. I think a snake, with his teeth drawn, a very pretty beast ; and a tiger in a cage is a pretty beast too. The only thing which can make any thing appear hateful or ugly in my eyes, is its power of injuring me. Take that away, and every thing is either pleasing or indifferent. Thus, you see, my charity extends a great deal farther than yours.”

“ It may do so,” I replied ; “ but as I have not yet had the pleasure of seeing your charity produce any very good effects towards your fellow-creatures, you will excuse me for doubting its quality.”

This kind of jarring conversation continued

for some time longer ; but still we did converse ; and there was an easy sort of boldness about the man, with whom I was now forced into companionship, an odd mixture of good-humoured frankness and impudent villainy, that drove me from all the strongholds of reserve, and even anger, by which my mind was fortified against him. Gradually, from simply replying to his observations, or retorting somewhat rudely his sarcastic remarks, I was led on to more easy communion ; and as we got farther to sea, and his servants with the sailors congregated in the bow of the vessel, we began to speak of the past events, in which we had both been engaged, without treating each other with any great ceremony, indeed, but without any expressions of great animosity.

Of his own actions, and his own principles, Walter Dixon spoke without the slightest reserve ; and I could not help remembering and applying the words of Ireton, who had called him a *blunt hypocrite*—a term which had struck me at first, as implying a contradiction, but which the more I considered the conduct of

the man before me, I found to be the only words which really characterised him.

“ I never conceal any thing,” he said, while speaking of all that had passed. “ I never conceal any thing, when the affair is done and over. I am perfectly willing to tell every one concerned how such a thing happened, or why I acted in such a manner. I desire heartily that every body with whom I am likely to come in contact, should know my character thoroughly. It is like in fighting a duel, in which case my adversary has a just right to know the arms which I oppose to him. If I do not beat him with them, it is my want of skill or courage ; but I am never afraid of that.”

“ If such be the case then, Master Walter Dixon,” I rejoined, “ probably you will have no objection to explain to me a few of the particulars concerning the affairs we have had together ; for though I know the general facts pretty well, yet there are some of the minor details which puzzle me a good deal.”

“ Why,” he replied, “ the whole affair is not quite over yet ; and there are some little se-

crets which I choose to keep in reserve ; but I will tell you a great deal more than you do know ; and perhaps you may find that you have come to wrong conclusions on many subjects. First let me hear what you think you know. Then we shall see whether you are right."

He seemed not a little startled at hearing all I did know ; and as I took good care to conceal the accident by which the greater part of my information was acquired, he replied, " You have either been dealing with the devil, or some one has betrayed me ; and yet I know nobody who could do so, for some one took care to silence the person who might have told most. However, as you know so much, I will tell you something more. Come, sit down here on this chest, and I will while away the time with a tale."

" My mother was the only sister of Lord Ashkirk," he proceeded, in the tone of one about to begin a narrative of his whole life. " He was a poor peer ; and she made a foolish marriage with an attorney, Walter Dixon, by whom she had an only son, called also, as

you know, Walter Dixon. Lord Ashkirk, however, was shrewd, and a courtier, and a Papist ; and about eighteen years ago, amongst the courtly dissensions, which ushered in the reign, he contrived, with easy grace and faithful friendship, to betray his friend, who had been a little premature in taking advantage of this age's taste for high treason. His friend was tried, condemned, and his estates forfeited ; and Lord Ashkirk found means to insinuate to the monarch, that the best reward for his important service, and the best compensation for the agonized feelings, with which loyalty had compelled him to betray his friend, would be a grant of that friend's estates. The monarch viewed his piteous case in the same light that he did himself, granted him the estates, and instead of a poor peer, Lord Ashkirk was a rich one. As long as Lord Ashkirk was a poor peer, Walter Dixon the attorney, who was pretty well off in the world, and Walter Dixon's wife, had very little to do with Lord Ashkirk : but when Lord Ashkirk became a rich peer, it is wonderful what an affectionate brother and sis-

ter they showed themselves. Now Lord Ashkirk's estates would certainly have made a very pleasant addition to the property of his next akin ; but it unfortunately fell out, that the noble peer had one daughter, the Lady Eleanor Freerston ; and, though there are various ways of poisoning rats, yet arsenic sprinkled on bread and butter, had been of late so fertile in halters, that my father and mother would have nothing to do with it. They happily discovered, however, that first cousins might marry, even when one was a Papist, by a dispensation ; and consequently I was continually at the side of the Lady Eleanor, continually at the elbow of Lord Ashkirk. Under the counsels of my father, whose advice was somewhat bold, I plied my fair cousin with love in all forms ; and found her perfectly willing that I, as well as every one else, should be her devoted slave ; but when I went any farther and talked of private marriages, *et cætera*, she was as cold as ice, and as freezing as the north-east wind."

As he went on, Walter Dixon bit his lip, and I could see that he was more deeply moved by

the things he spoke of, than he desired to show. He proceeded, however, in a moment, as calmly as ever. “Well, finding that the young lady, who had seemed the easiest game, was in fact the most difficult, I turned to the old Lord, whose faculties, thank God, were not quite so keen as they had been; and by dint of flattering, and coaxing, and keeping all others away from him as much as possible, I at length, in a moment of softness, made him promise me his daughter’s hand. His daughter declared her obedience; and, the happiest man in the world, I set off to let my respectable parents know the success of our endeavours. Unfortunately during my absence, two Popish gentlemen, who had been travelling together in Italy — one, Sir Andrew Fleming; and the other, a Monsieur du Tillet, arrived at Penford-bourne, and you can guess the rest. Lord Ashkirk was a cavalier and a Papist, and I was attached to the Parliament; but I had at best two thousand a-year, and Sir Andrew Fleming had ten. He fell in love with the Lady Eleanor, and demanded her hand: the old peer had

sometimes a short memory, and he forgot his promise to me. The young lady was still all obedience, and followed her father's example. The first news I heard was that the Lady Eleanor Freerston had become Lady Eleanor Fleming; and I came back with all speed, not to vent my fury in empty words, but to revenge myself the best way I could, by rendering the knight as unhappy in his marriage, as he had rendered me by it. To my surprise, however, I found the post of lover filled also; and Du Tillet, as it appeared to me, doing his dear friend, Sir Andrew Fleming, the good service of making love to his young wife. Whether it was so or not, I will not now be quite sure. However, I found that the marriage was likely to be as wretched as I could desire it. Sir Andrew was much older than his wife. Her heart went but little with the vow she pledged at the altar, and small was the harvest of love which the husband reaped from the unwilling wife. She was prodigal a little of her smiles to younger men — fond of adulation, flattery, and courtship; and beam-

ing with beauty and with charms to every one but him who thought them his right. Those beams were indeed as the moon-beams, bright and cold; for she seemed to think a light laugh, or a dazzling smile, sufficient payment for the deepest love that man could show. I had not time indeed to try my power over her; for that Du Tillet, jealous, I believe, himself, took care to inflame the heart of his friend with the same feelings. Sir Andrew Fleming is one of the most deeply revengeful of men—almost as much so as myself. His jealousy excited him almost to insanity; but I was not a man to be turned from my path by any fears, and I measured blades secretly, both with Du Tillet and Sir Andrew Fleming. Slightly wounded by the one, I was afterwards stretched apparently lifeless on the green sward by the other. Their very success, however, promoted my designs. I was borne into the house, and so much kind tending did my fair cousin show, that her husband's wrath passed all bounds, threatened his intellect, and her life. It was found necessary to separate them; and Sir Andrew Fle-

ming consented to relinquish the society of a woman whose coldness to himself but rendered her suavity to others the more terrible to his sight. But he did so alone, upon the solemn promise from her father, that I should never more enter the doors of his dwelling, and from herself, that she would never willingly see me again."

I listened attentively to Walter Dixon's account of himself, for the history of such a man's life could never be without its interest to one whose fate had been so materially influenced by his agency. I could not exactly see, however, how the long story he was telling affected the questions which I wanted resolved; and it is probable, that some such feelings betrayed themselves in my countenance, for he proceeded, "I see you do not comprehend to what this tale points; or rather, like all other men, you are thinking, at every word I utter, how far it is relative to yourself. Well, you shall soon see. I did not *vow* revenge, as people call it; for those who take the trouble of vowing any thing, are very sure at the moment they do

vow, that a time will come when their feelings will have changed, and that a vow may be necessary to steady their purpose. No, no, I did not vow revenge ; but I resolved upon it, without a doubt of ever losing the desire. How far I followed it, and what success I have hitherto had, is another question, on which there is no need to speak. But at the same time that I took that resolve, I took another which I have pursued as keenly, and that was, to find means, in the course of events, to make that property mine, which the marriage of my promised wife to another had torn from me. I determined that it should be so ! and depend upon it, that if a man fixes his eyes steadfastly on one particular object in life, bends all his efforts and his thoughts to its attainment, never suffers himself, either to be diverted by other pursuits, or rebuffed by difficulties, or scared by dangers, or stopped by those phantoms of the imagination with which nurses and priests fill the weak ears of children—depend upon it, I say, there are a thousand chances to one, that he accomplishes his design. The times, too, were

the most fortunate that could have happened for the attainment of my object. The civil war was shaking all the foundations of society ; men's minds became thirsty for new changes and new notions, and there was no saying what transfer of property might take place, when all old rights were annulled. I eagerly embarked in the strife ; of course, amongst the advocates of change, each of whom was following his own particular purpose exactly as I was following mine : each of whom—covered under what pretence he would—strove for some private and selfish object ; either wealth, power, fame, ambition, or, worst of all, fanaticism, as certainly as Walter Dixon, or the noblest cavalier among your chivalrous party. We *were* all selfish alike—we *are* all selfish alike—we *shall be* all selfish alike to the end of the world. However, we did not all pursue our path with the same steady footsteps. I went on in the service, distinguished myself, as people term it, fought hard and well, and became Captain, Colonel, General Dixon ; but still my object was the rich lands and estates of Penford-

bourne. I canted with the fanatics, I harangued with the levellers, I raved with the fifth-monarchy men, but still my object was Penford-bourne. If I was successful in any attempt, the reward I required was that. If any accident happened to me, I strove so to turn it that it might bring me nearer that goal. In the mean time, my father, and mother, and uncle, all died; and a clerk of my father's took to serve in the army under me. He was clever, brave, villainous, and hypocritical, in a higher degree than most men; and having caught Lord Fairfax's attention, he was taken by him as a valet; on which occasion, wanting money, he plundered the good Presbyterian of all his moveable cash, and laid the blame upon a party of the enemy. I detected him, but instead of betraying poor Matthew Hutchinson, as some might have been foolish enough to do, I lauded his skill and ability, but only advised him to quit the service of the good Lord Fairfax. This he did; and received a high recommendation from that worthy General, to your father, under the name of Gabriel Jones.

On my visit to Exeter, when first I met you, I discovered from my good cousin Habacuc Grimstone, all that passed in your neighbourhood; and having opened a communication with Gabriel Jones, I soon discovered that you were not all as pacific as you seemed. The levying of your forces, was indeed well concealed; but at length I discovered it, and magnifying the extent of your power, communicated it to the Council of State. The whole country was in a state of anarchy; Cromwell was marching for Wales; Fairfax and Skippon had Goring, and Capel, and Hales, and Lucas, and Lisle, about their ears; and had nearly lost their wits with fright, when they heard of new force marching from Devonshire. I took good care that you should meet with no opposition; for it was a part of my policy to frighten them all as much as possible; and every movement made to stop you, was instantly told to Gabriel Jones, and from him to your brother. At length, I offered to delay your march by stratagem, if Fairfax and the rest would promise me Penford-bourne; and

my plan was laid, to prove its mistress a rank malignant, and so give good excuse for forfeiture, while at the same time I made use of her as the means of deserving the reward, by staying your march. All that the Generals could do, was to promise their influence; but I thought that would be enough, and I joined you at Amesbury, as you remember, kept you clear of Hornsby's forces, and piloted you safe to Penford-bourne. There I gave timely notice to the fair dame of your arrival, conveyed to you plenty of false intelligence about the position of the forces, stopped your messengers to Lord Goring; and, in short, delayed you till the royalists were attacked at Wrotham—"

"But tell me," I interrupted, "did I, or did I not hear that accursed villain, Jones, conversing with some one called Avery, in the ruins of the old castle above Penford-bourne?"

"You heard him conversing with me," replied Walter Dixon, "and the name of Avery was that under which I lay concealed at Exeter. A hearty fright you gave us; but Hutchin-

son soon made his way back to the Manor by the old private path, which I had shown him ; and I lay concealed in the vaults till your troopers were gone. I gave your brother a worse alarm than that, though," he continued, " on that very night, when one of your messengers that I had safely imprisoned, as I thought, made his escape, and returned to your quarters. I met the worthy lover wandering by night in the park, and musing by the melancholy moon. He saw a stranger, though I fled fast enough, my business being with Gabriel Jones, not him. He then pursued me sword in hand, when suddenly I disappeared amongst the old cells, leaving him to think he had seen a ghost. However, my plans, as you know, succeeded well : and by one witchery or another, he was kept sufficiently long for Fairfax to have beaten Goring ten times over, if he had had any activity. Well, after that—"

" But tell me," I said, again breaking in upon the course of his story, " Who was the man—for you of course know—by whose hand

my brother had so near died on the morning of our march for Maidstone?"

"Did your brother never tell you?" demanded the other in some surprise.

"Never," I replied. "I never asked him directly, it is true; but I did all but ask him, and he showed no disposition to give me any information on the subject."

"Nor will I then, either," said Walter Dixon. "That business is not yet ended; and I do not know what it may produce; therefore the least said on it the better."

"It could not be yourself with whom he fought," I rejoined, "for you were then in safe custody at the village."

"No, no! it was not with me," replied the other; and then, after musing a moment he demanded, "Is your brother a good swordsman?"

"The best I ever saw," I replied; at which he looked up eagerly, demanding, "Then why did he not kill him?"

"His foot slipped, I believe," I answered;

“but never on the green sward or in the fencing room, did I see a better swordsman than Frank Masterton.”

“Indeed!” he said eagerly, “indeed!” and then seeing me somewhat surprised, at the interest he seemed to take in a matter of little concern to him, he added abruptly, “How infernally these little vessels pitch! But to go on with my story.”

“But stay, Master Dixon,” I said, “Why do you wish so particularly to know my brother’s skill in fencing?—You ask curiously on the matter.”

“I may wish to know whether he is a man to be quarrelled with or not,” replied the other with a grim smile, that announced his words to be one of those excuses, to which we cannot well refuse currency, although we do not believe a word of them.

“But to go on with my story,” continued Walter Dixon. “When the whole was over, the Council of State found some specious excuse to refuse me the estates. What could I think? I fancied that the fair Lady Eleanor

had some special friends amongst them ; and I remembered that Ireton, General Cromwell's son-in-law, had once been nobly entertained at Penford-bourne. Half out of my senses with anger, I went down into Kent again, to catechise the lady herself. I found her in despair about your brother—A woman who, I had imagined, could love no earthly thing but her fair self, was mad with love of a raw boy from the heart of Devonshire. As I had served her once or twice in days of old, and she knew that what I undertook I would carry through, she prayed my help, as soon as she found that I had discovered how her heart stood. Our plan was soon laid ; I perceived that she was willing to sacrifice every thing for him ; and that he was willing to resign home, and family, and friends for her. Under such circumstances there was little difficulty ; and I easily made my arrangements to gratify the loving turtles, by the same means that conveyed me the estate. I am always willing to do any good turn that may fall in my way ; but in the present instance, there was a little spice of revengeful pleasure in the

thought of seeing a woman who had trifled with my love, and sported with the passion of a thousand others, willingly like a moth burn her wings in the flame round which she played. To see her sacrifice virtue, reputation, fortune, and all the home luxuries she had been accustomed to from infancy, for—love! simple, blind, passionate, headstrong, absurd love! Then again, when I thought of the effect it would have upon that deep-passioned, insane wretch, Fleming, when he heard that his lovely wife, in whose every action—notwithstanding all that had passed, notwithstanding that to him she was as one dead—in whose every action he felt a profound and maddening interest, when he heard that she had blasted her own name and honour, by going off with your brother!”

“Very pleasant anticipations, indeed! Master Dixon,” I replied, as he paused for a moment in his recital to contemplate the picture of vengeance he had raised up before his own eyes. “Very pleasant anticipations, indeed! but not very holy ones.”

“ Holy !” he exclaimed, with a bitter sneer. “ There are but two things on earth, young man, that can gratify a strong heart, or a strong head—interest or revenge ; and in what I proposed, they were both combined ; for the moment that the Lady Eleanor Fleming had fled the country with a known malignant, her estates could not be well refused, I thought, to one who had so well deserved them as I had. Accordingly Hutchinson, or Gabriel Jones, as you call him, was brought in play ; and while he carried to and from Exeter, sundry sweet love epistles for your brother, he bore intelligence for me of all that passed within the walls of Masterton House. I received at length copies of the replies of all the cavaliers, invited to your brother’s wedding. I denounced the proposed assembly to the Council of State, as a royalist meeting for raising the whole of Devonshire, gained a warrant for the arrest of all the party, and set off post haste to execute it myself. I need hardly tell you the rest. My idiot cousin, Habacuc Grimstone, detained us till

we were nearly too late, in order to sing a psalm at Exeter. As you know, however, we arrived in time."

"And may I ask," I demanded, "what was the temptation to Master Gabriel Jones, so systematically to betray a family in which he had been used so kindly?"

"Oh, like a wise man, he never acted without two or three strong motives," replied Walter Dixon. "In the first place he coveted sundry services of gold and silver, which were to be his part of the spoil of the Egyptians; also a small estate in Dorsetshire, belonging to the Lords Masterton, which I promised my best efforts to obtain for him. Then he had a sweet and pious hankering after the charms of the bride.—Do not look so furious, Master Harry! Depend upon it, a valet de chambre has as good right to covet his master's bride, as a younger to covet his elder brother's. But the strongest, and most unchangeable motive of Gabriel Jones to hate and destroy your family, was, that you were malignants—that you were of a different creed from himself.—

He could pardon those who were of no religion at all, or any that suited the time, like myself ; but he could not pardon those who were the opponents of his own sect ; and he would have destroyed you all, root and branch, if his good will had had its way. His commanding without any right or reason the men to fire, when they were too willing to obey, was proof enough of his hatred. If some one had not shot him in the scuffle, I believe I should have shot him myself, for involving us all in such an affray. And now have you any thing more to ask, for I am as frank and free as the day, and will tell you candidly, what I tell you at all ?”

“ There is a great deal more yet, Master Dixon,” I replied. “ In the first place, pray why did you pursue me so fiercely, when in fact my brother was the only person you wanted of the whole ?”

“ Because your name was in the warrant,” he answered, “ and I was obliged, at all events, to seem to do my duty. Besides, I longed very much to repay you a kind imprisonment to which you subjected me in Kent ; and I am

one of those who always like to give back interest along with the principal sum.—Is there any thing more?”

“ You have not yet told me the ultimate fate of my brother,” I replied.

“ Oh ! I thought you must have heard all that in London,” answered Walter Dixon. “ He contrived to effect his escape by the means of the Lady Eleanor Fleming, whose handy work I took care should be sufficiently apparent in the whole business. When last I left them, they were cooing like turtle-doves ; but the news of your father’s death reached him, I hear, afterwards, for he had not seen him fall. Those tidings saddened him, they say, a great deal, and I did not see him again before they set out together for France. The rest of the cavaliers who were taken, easily proved that they were merely invited to a wedding, and will get free with a little fine and imprisonment. I am the worst off of all ; for after having laboured for the State as boldly and as busily as most, I am still denied my reward, because Fleming happens to be protected by Mazarin.”

“What, then, is your purpose, now?” I demanded, innocently enough.

“Nay, nay, Master Henry, your pardon there,” replied my companion. “The past is the property of every one—the future is my own. I care not who knows what I have done—but I do not love that people should know what I may do. Some people call me a hypocrite, but they do so falsely—I am quite willing that all the world should know—”

“Every thing but what you choose to conceal,” I rejoined.

“True,” he replied; “but my character, and the principles on which I act—I make no concealment there—I deceive no one in regard to them.”

“Is it not for the purpose of deceiving them more successfully in after things?” I demanded.

“How so?” he said.

“By throwing them off their guard by general candour, till they take the individual deceit you wish, as matter of fact too,” I replied. “Just as you must have seen an artful fencer, Master Dixon, lunge loose sometimes, till by

a close feint, he hits his antagonist on the heart."

He paused musing for a moment, and then replied coolly, "Perhaps it may be so—The sea is getting calmer."

CHAPTER X.

THERE are some men who, sooner than not talk of themselves at all, would talk of their own shame; and Walter Dixon might possibly be one of these. Nevertheless, I think that he had deeper motives, and he was deceived, if, as I believe, he sought by the bold sketch of his own character, which he had just given, to make me his dupe in other respects. I certainly never doubted that he was fully as bad, remorseless, and artful, as he had pictured himself — and that was surely bad enough. But I did not give him the least credit for the candour he assumed. I concluded that it was entirely a piece of acting, and as pure hypocrisy as the religion of the fifth-monarchy men.

Doubtless he had in some degree painted his character as it really was; but then he knew that I had previously formed my own appreciation of it much in the same manner; and he risked little in acknowledging qualities which I already attributed to him. At the same time it is to be remarked, that all the principal facts which he narrated I before knew, or must soon have learned; and that the evil qualities which he owned, such as selfishness, cunning, and revenge, he looked upon as virtues when joined with courage, perseverance, and skill, though I regarded them as vices under any combination.

On the whole, therefore, he made a great display of candour at a small cost. But if he did it purposely to throw me off my guard, an opinion which after circumstances confirmed, he was very much mistaken. Not that I ever proposed to compete in cunning and policy with a man whose whole life had been expended in following the narrow and tortuous paths of deceit; but I resolved carefully to avoid him, as I would some loathsome animal; not alone from the hatred I bore him, as the active agent in the

infinite evils which had already befallen my family, but as a dangerous and uncertain companion, on whose conduct I could never count with security either in good or evil. The first of these feelings, nevertheless, I could hardly subdue, although I felt that I could not seek a personal quarrel with a man, because he had injured me in the service of another party to which he belonged; but, I believe, it was the evident and unconcealed selfishness of his views, even in the service of that other party, which made me far more rancorous, in my abhorrence of him, than I felt towards Fairfax, Ireton, Cromwell, or any other of the Parliamentary leaders, who had done far more injury to my country or myself than he had.

Even Habacuc Grimstone, who had used every means in his small power to effect the ruin of my family, I viewed with less individual antipathy than I did Walter Dixon; and although my life had grown into more consequence in my eyes, since the love of Emily Langleigh had given new value to existence, I would willingly have crossed swords with him,

if he had afforded me any fair excuse of rendering our quarrel personal. He took care not to do so, however; for though he was, I believe, totally without fear, yet he looked upon life as the means of accomplishing his purposes, and enjoying his desires—and he took as much care of it as of any other valuable property.

When I had embarked for France, on board the same vessel with Walter Dixon, I had contemplated proceeding at once to Paris, for the purpose of tracing my brother; but as I found, from some casual words that fell from my Parliamentary, that I should have the same unwished-for companion all along the road to the capital, I determined to return to Brittany at once, and thence conduct Emily and Lady Margaret to the French metropolis.

This change of purpose I took care, however, to conceal; and we landed at Calais, with the apparent design of both proceeding to Paris the next morning. I nevertheless sauntered out into the town, before I went to bed, and found my two Brittany horses still in the hands of the *maquignon* to whom I had sold them. A

small advance of price soon made them mine once more ; and before it was daylight next morning, I descended to the *salle à manger*, where I was despatching a rapid breakfast in the full expectation of bidding adieu to Master Dixon for ever, as I believed him to be too devoted a voluptuary to quit his bed before high noon — when, to my astonishment, he entered the same apartment, and seated himself opposite to me.

“ I remembered you were an early riser,” he said — demanding his breakfast at the same time, without any other comment on my purpose of setting out without him — “ I remembered you were an early riser, and therefore rose just three hours before my time.”

As far as Abbeville our roads lay together, and therefore, as it did not suit me to explain either the object or the direction of my journey, I determined to let him accompany me so far ; and once there, to quit him either openly or secretly, as I found most convenient. On mounting our horses, I was somewhat surprised to find that he journeyed on alone ;

and seeing my astonishment, as he was a great interpreter of looks, he replied at once to my thoughts, by saying — “ They” (meaning his servants) — “ they follow in an hour or two Your rapid movements have thrown their preparations behindhand.”

We now rode on upon our way with tolerable good-humour on both parts. The horse, which he also had bought while we were at Calais, was a more showy beast than either of mine, but not near so strong; and he proceeded slowly, in order to spare its strength. As if by mutual consent, we avoided all allusion to the subjects which had rendered our conversation of the day before painful though interesting; and I amused myself with tracing, as we went forward, the workings of his dark and subtle mind, which regarded every thing that he saw, whether it was a beautiful scene, or a fleeting cloud, or a group of peasants at a cabaret, with a strange reference to himself. It seemed as if nature had given him a power, in passing through the universe in which she had cast him, to extract in an instant, from every object

of every kind, its relationship to his own interests, or his own wishes, or his own enjoyments. Self, in his nature, was not, as in that of other men, the predominant principle; but it was the absorbing whole, — and I verily believe that he never wasted a thought upon any thing but inasmuch as it affected self.

Not long after passing Marquise, just as we had mounted the little hill, and were riding leisurely onward, a traveller who had taken the post, and was galloping along with his postilion at a great rate, rode by us, scarcely pausing to give us a passing salute.

“That is a fellow of Hyde’s,” cried Walter Dixon, as he passed. “Perhaps we might get some tidings from him, if we could catch him;” and, setting spurs to his horse, he rode after the traveller as fast as possible.

On the other side of the hill is a deep sort of wooded glen, where four valleys meet, with a little stream running through it; and at the bifurcation of the road, which here branches into two, is planted a little drinking-house, where the postilions stop to breathe their

horses, and take their stated portion of strong waters. We had seen the traveller and his companion go over the hill, and into the valley; but, on looking down from the top of the rise, we could descry no traces of them. Their horses were not, as we might have expected, standing at the door of the little cabaret; and we rode down, passed the inn-window—from which a woman's face was gazing at us—and taking the road, that, winding through the wood, had been hidden from us as we stood above, proceeded quickly on our way.

Suddenly, however, General Dixon pulled in his rein. “We may be wrong yet,” said he. “Have you any objection to turn back, and ask at that cabaret which is our right way?”

“None in the world,” I answered; “and the more readily, because I thought I heard a distant cry for help.”

We were not more than three hundred yards from the place, and turning at once, we galloped back towards it. Another cry met our ears just as we drew the rein; and as we came nearer, loud sounds of expostulation and en-

treaty were heard distinctly, proceeding from the open windows of the cabaret. Before exactly quitting the shelter of the wood, we dismounted, and tying our horses to the trees, walked on as quickly as possible, while the sounds of lamentation, and sorrow, and terror, became more and more loud each moment. We had heard many a report of robbers on the way, while we were at Calais; and those sounds immediately led us to conclusions which required no verbal communication to show each of us, what his companion was thinking of. We looked in each other's faces, and that was quite enough.

“They are murdering that poor devil of Hyde's,” whispered Walter Dixon at length: “I know his voice:—what shall we do? Shall we lay on, a' God's name, as Habacuc would say, and take the chance of the odds? or shall we mind the good old rule, and keep our own fingers out of the fire?”

“Lay on, in God's name,” replied I; “we are both well armed, and two strong men. The postilion will make a third.”

“The postilion!” exclaimed he with a sneer,

which was fully justified afterwards. “The postilion! — but never mind — on, on, good Master Harry! and I will back you without flinching — on my soul — the servants will soon be here too, and here is your boy, as good as half a dozen.” As he spoke, he pushed me forward to the door, which was open, and advancing along a narrow passage, as silently as possible, I came to a smaller door on the left hand, from which abundance of doleful sounds were proceeding.

“I have nothing more! indeed I have nothing more!” cried a voice from within, in execrable bad French and a strong English tone, “Search me as much as you like, but spare my life, gentlemen!”

A thunder of mixed French and English oaths followed, while a female tongue was heard exclaiming, with much of the precision of a cuckoo clock, and about the same degree of feeling, “*Mon Dieu, c’est terrible! Bon Dieu, c’est abominable! Messieurs! Messieurs, ayez pitié, je vous en prie — je vous conjure! Mon Dieu! Bon Dieu!*” &c. &c.

As she spoke, I pushed open the door, and a scene presented itself, which had something in it both shocking and ludicrous. The room was evidently the common room of a cabaret, and on a table, in one corner, stood glasses and bottles, and all the implements for quenching thirst. The middle of the chamber, however, was quite cleared, as if to give a fair arena, which appeared unincumbered by any furniture but one chair, that lay overthrown on the ground, supporting the head of the traveller who had passed us, as two stout men held him down, one of whom was busily rifling his person, while the other calmly held a pistol to his head. Close by, with a rope in her hand—as if either to remind the two active personages on the stage, of the usual end of their doings, or to assist in binding the hands of the more passive of the performers—stood the mistress of the house, whose face we had seen watching us through the window as we passed the inn at first. This good lady's appearance was any thing but prepossessing, though it certainly bore the marks of jaded beauty, the fair traces

of which were almost worn out by many a vice besides drunkenness. I think I never in my life beheld a more complete picture of apathy than her countenance presented, while standing by, with the rope in her hand, she uttered, by rote, the words which I have mentioned.

The man who presented the pistol was a tall long-bearded gentleman, whose features were not bad, but whose face, and person altogether, presented that strange unhappy look, which is only given by thorough debauchery. There was in it, too, the air of careless frivolity, so much assumed by the English cavaliers, and he held the murderous weapon to his victim's head, as a fop might hold a pouncet-box. His dress had once been handsome, and its good fashion made it, at first sight, appear strange in such a scene, till the eye detected some rather anomalous patchings and darnings; which, like a forced simile patched on a good piece of eloquence, only served to show where the original foundation was somewhat ragged.

Before they were aware of our presence we caught a part of their brief colloquy. "What

does she say?" demanded the man who was rifling the fallen traveller, alluding to something the woman whispered to the other, just as we entered.

"Damn the ——," replied the pistol-bearer in English, "she asks why we do not shoot him, to make all safe."

"The best way too!" grumbled the other; but, at that moment, a loud scream from the lady of the house, who at the same instant dropped the rope, and clasped her hands in an attitude of interesting surprise, announced to her companions the presence of unexpected witnesses; and, starting from their less important avocation, they faced us at once, while pistols were levelled and swords drawn on both sides. The traveller started from the floor, and armed himself suddenly with a chair, for his sword had been taken from him; the woman screamed aloud; the worthy plunderers shouted threats against the *Matin de Postillon*, who, as they thought, had betrayed them; and what would have followed I do not know, had not Walter Dixon suddenly dropped the muz-

zle of his pistol, and casting himself into one of the chairs by the window, burst into a loud and uncontrollable fit of laughter.

The sounds of mirth, at such a moment, had the exact reverse effect of Orpheus' lyre, and every one, instead of dancing, stood stock still, gazing on the person who could find matter for merriment in so serious a scene. Still, however, Walter Dixon laughed on, and in a moment or two afterwards I thought I began to see the brow of the pistol-bearing gentleman smooth a little down; and a sort of faint grin of recognition come over his countenance.

"Ha, ha, ha!" cried Walter Dixon; "Ha, ha, ha! good Master Daintree! dearly beloved Master Daintree! what have three short years brought thee to this summary mode of recruiting the exchequer? Ha, ha, ha! But still thou art right! Stand and deliver! is thy trade, take my word for it. Thou art too hasty to win a fortune by the ivory islands, surrounded by their sea of leather. Forswear the dice-box, Master Daintree, and look well to the priming, and thou may'st yet be a great man,

and reach an elevated station. Ha, ha, ha ! Mind you that night, when we—”

“ Not a word of that, Sir !” cried the other, colouring, till his bronzed cheek grew of the hue of a horn lanthorn newly lighted ; “ not a word of that, Sir, I say !”

But still Walter Dixon laughed on. “ Ha, ha, ha ! That worthy,” he cried, turning to me, “ that worthy, with the pistol in his hand and the ominous countenance, as if he would shoot me in the middle of my tale—that worthy, some five years ago, was a gay and ruffling cavalier, who made himself fine in doublets that he had not paid for, and drunk with wine that other folks supplied ; when, lo and behold, suddenly finding himself hard pressed for cash, too well known to find lenders ; and, there being none in the royal camp from whom he could steal, he puts on a sober look and a sour suit, and comes up to London to find some weak brother of the Independent creed, who was given to the carnal abomination of gaming. There he met with one Walter Dixon, for whom he did some good services in a bold way, and having found some

birds he deemed he could gull, he set to work in hopeful style, lost a few pieces, won a few more; but greediness forgot caution—he got on too quick—was detected, and—shall I tell the rest?

“But no,” he added, after a moment’s pause. Whether he saw any thing dangerous in the fellow’s face or not, I cannot tell. “But no,” he added, we will not mind the rest; and now, good Master Daintree, I am sorry to spoil your sport; but you have got all you can from this worthy person, who handles the chair he has in his hand, like Hercules his club, and you must let me have a few words with him. I may have some occupation for you myself.”

“Oh, certainly, Master Dixon,” replied the other, “certainly! Zounds, speak your fill to him. Every man should have time to speak, whether he is to die or live.”

Walter Dixon now accordingly advanced to the poor traveller, who had stood by, listening to all that had passed, with little participation in the jocularities which my excellent companion had evinced, but expecting every minute to hear something which might decide his fate. He

then spoke to him for a few minutes, in a whisper, though what he learned or sought to learn I never discovered. In the mean while the two thieves conversed also in an under voice, and it seemed to me that they were consulting as to the propriety of making their escape as fast as possible. Probably the position which I maintained near the door decided them to remain, for, after a moment, they became silent again, and turned their eyes towards the other two. The traveller, whoever he was, seemed in no mood to refuse any information; and, after some brief questions, General Dixon turned to the others, saying, "Now, good Master Daintree, you must let this gentleman go."

"No, d— me if he shall," cried the one who, when we entered, had been holding the traveller down, "not till I see what he has in that other pouch of his."

"He shall not?" asked Walter Dixon, whose eye I had seen glance twice towards the window, "he shall not, did you say? and he calmly cocked the pistol he had in his hand.

"No, he shall not!" said the other dogged villain, who, it now appeared, was an English-

man also; and, indeed, it was unhappily too frequent at that time to see our countrymen in the capacity in which these two appeared, especially on the roads in the immediate neighbourhood of the French coast; which many of them reached, after bearing a share in the civil wars, perfectly destitute in circumstances, and hardened by long familiarity with scenes of bloodshed, vice, and improvidence.

“No, he shall not, I say!” reiterated the desperado; but, at that moment, there was the sound of several horses on the road, and Walter Dixon, leaning towards the window, exclaimed, “Halt there, without! Now, Sir,” he added, turning to the other, “without any wish to interfere with the execution of your very honourable calling, I have only to say to you, that you have had this worthy personage for at least five minutes at your clear disposal—a space of time quite as long as any reasonable man could desire to have his hands in another man’s pockets. There are my servants, as you may see, four in number, and I have only to tell you, that you must, without another word, suffer this gentle-

man to walk out of the door, mount his horse, and ride on with the honest postilion who brought him here—and who can call for his share as he comes back—or I must mount you and your friend (and my friend also) Monsieur Daintree, behind one of my fellows, and carry you into Abbeville, as the prelude to a farther journey by a speedier conveyance.”

Such an appeal was not to be resisted. The man acquiesced with dogged sullenness: but Master Daintree, who seemed to have every reliance upon Walter Dixon’s secrecy and friendship, acted as mediator upon the occasion, introduced his friend, Captain Wighton, whom the worthy General received with mock ceremony and politeness, and then ushering forth the unhappy traveller, whispered a warning in his ear, well calculated to make him silent for some miles at least.

I am afraid, however, that other means were resorted to for the purpose of insuring his discretion in regard to what had occurred to him on the road, for I never could hear that he reached his destination. It is not unlikely, indeed, that

the postilion's fears might prove even more dangerous to him than those of the robbers. But to return to ourselves, Walter Dixon seemed to feel astonishingly little horror or detestation at the trade of the two ruffians who remained beside us; and assuring them that Paris was the only place for men of their talents to thrive, he desired to see them if they journeyed thitherward, and gave them the means of finding him when they came.

We then mounted our horses and rode away, and as we proceeded, I could not forbear commenting on his behaviour. He replied only with his usual sneering laugh.

“By my faith!” said he, “that is always the way with you cavaliers. You are less charitable to your own party than we Parliamentarians are. Now those two men are both of them as excellent royalists as ever lived. Nay, you need not turn so red, Master Harry Masterton. I said not all cavaliers are thieves, though some thieves are cavaliers. One of those men I know to be a cavalier—that Master Daintree. He had once a little property;

was a reckless bold boy ; grew up a reckless brave man, and as honourable as all men are, till they want money. Soon, however, he got poor ; and drank a little, as the best comfort in poverty, and gambled a little, as the best remedy. All was fair at first, but somehow, between drinking and gambling, a man soon begins to see a little confusedly in matters of honour, and to risk somewhat more than his money upon the game. Daintree got blasted in the royal army, and then because he had pigeoned a few fools of thick-headed Cavaliers, he thought he could cope with Presbyterians and Independents. With this view he stayed about six months in London, where he did me a few of those little services that I needed in various ways ; and the last time I saw him was in a house where he was acting the part of football to about twenty very godly feet, the heads belonging to which he had foolishly thought it within his poor capacity to cheat. He called lustily for my help, which I afforded him by adding the last kick, that sent him rolling out into the street, and I have never seen him since till this day.

With various anecdotes of such persons and their manifold plans of proceeding, Walter Dixon amused the way, and nothing afterwards happened on our journey to Abbeville which is worth recording. At that town I found it easier to quit my companion, without either explanation or discussion, than I expected. We arrived towards night, and declaring that he had not had one fair night's rest since we had travelled together, Walter Dixon announced his intention of sleeping for two hours longer the following day than he usually had done, especially as our horses were somewhat fatigued with our last day's journey. I rose very early, however, and broke my fast with all calmness. Little Ball-o'-fire was never behind, and hiring a flat-bottomed boat to carry us across the river, we soon put the Somme between us and our unsafe companion, and as the sun rose high, were once more on horseback, and again wending gladly onward towards Dinan.

I know few feelings on earth half so joyful, as that with which one sets out to rejoin a person one loves, after a brief absence. It is Hope's own

pilgrimage; and never did I feel the influence of life's fairy guide more sweetly, than on that journey into Brittany. Oh how she made all the world smile around me, as I thought of Emily Langleigh! Nor was it a slight pleasure to be freed from Walter Dixon. His presence had sat upon the happiness of my return like an incubus; and the pleasant and honourable friends he had recognised on the road, had not served to make his company less oppressive. Freed from him, I now seemed to breathe more easily; there was a load off my breast, and the prospect of the rest of my journey was all delight. The weather, indeed, was beginning to be broken, and many an autumnal shower drenched me to the skin, as it flew over my head, on the wings of the swift equinox. I heeded them but little, however, and journeyed on from day to day, with a glad heart at the diminished distance. It is true, at times, as I stood upon some high hill and cast my eyes over the wide woods, covered with the dying hues of autumn, and waving in the melancholy wind, vague shadows of my own

mortality would seem to float across the sunshine of my mind ; and, without knowing why, I would shrink at the mystery of being, and the strange obscure relationship between myself and all around me, with my flesh of dust and withered leaves, and my spirit all unknown and mysterious even to itself.

Such fits forced themselves on me but seldom, and were the fruit of the silence in which I proceeded ; for my little Page, with all the activity and eagerness of his age, had none of its loquacity ; and though anxious to learn and comprehend everything as we passed on, a few brief words ever sufficed him, to ask his question or to make his observation.

About the eighth day of my journey, I began to feel impatient. I had been rather indulging too in a fit of gloom, when I was tempted to commit one of the greatest follies that a human being can practise, namely, to take a short cut.

The person who seduced me into this path was an old woman, of whom I asked the way ; and who told the straight road too, but at the same time she assured me the cross road was a

good hour shorter. We were at that moment on the top of a height, which commanded the greater part of the country round : and I could see the spires of the town to which I was going, rising in the grey evening, out of the trees in the far distance. I have often thought since, how often man in his journey through life, whether he be the private individual plodding on his own way, or the minister guiding forward the wild and stubborn horses of national policy ; how often in his journey through life he is tempted in the same way to the same folly. He stands for a moment on a spot from whence he can see laid out, as on a map, a thousand various paths wandering through the land before him. He quits the high road, long and tedious as it seems, and beaten by the feet of thousands ; and takes what seems the short and direct way to his object, as it lies before him distinct in the distant prospect ; but as he descends from the eminence, his general view gets lost and perplexed ; he finds the by-road rough, tortuous, hilly, perhaps impassable ; others spread out from it on either side, so like

itself, he knows not which is the right; he wastes his time in conjecture; chooses the wrong, and gets more and more entangled, till weary, late, and exhausted, some charitable hand leads him back to that same high road which he quitted so much in vain.

The straight road and the short cut, indeed, were both before my eyes, and the fault was all my own; but the wind rushed loud and chill, it was growing late, and gathered all round the dim sky, were mountainous masses of dull leaden clouds, threatening to pour an absolute deluge on the earth, as soon as the sun should go down. Every thing, even to the faint white glare of the heaven, over which a gauze of mist was drawn, counselled speed; and I was foolishly induced, as I have before said, to take the short cut.

I soon discovered that the road, which was good enough at the beginning, got very bad before it reached the middle; and as it entered a forest on its way, the deep and uncertain ruts, left by the wood carts, and filled with water by the late showers, nearly broke my horse's legs if

I attempted to go fast. In the mean time, the light waxed grey and more grey, and the melancholy whistling of the wind amongst the tall tree tops, reminded me how soon those clouds must come up, which I had seen gathering on the horizon ; while the dull splashing of our horses' feet, in the deep channels and puddles of the way, commented sadly on what we were to expect, and upbraided me at every step for my folly in taking the short cut.

Nothing could be done, however, but to ride on ; and ride on we did, as fast as it was possible, eyeing wistfully, every two or three hundred yards, some of the long avenues of the forest, and wondering whether we might not there find a better road. Every instant as it passed, took away some portion of light ; and the clouds, which now came rolling over our heads, added to the natural darkness of the hour. The incessant roar of the equinoctial gale, through the tall thin birches that now filled up the centre of the forest, began to be mingled with the pattering of the rain ; and, drenched without remedy, we rode on, with our boots full of water,

and the gusts of wind driving fresh torrents continually into our faces.

It did not long continue evening. No blessed twilight intervened; and all was darkness, so dark indeed, that I could not see the horse I sat upon. Trusting to the animal's instinct, I gave it the bridle; but it seemed to have as much difficulty in seeing its way, as I had in guiding it; and cautiously picking its steps along the swampy ground, it carried me at about a mile by the hour, beaten by the hurricane and drenched by the deluge that was falling from the sky.

This was not to be endured for long; and at length, using whip and spur, I forced the beast on, though both of us pursued our course in utter blindness. Shortly after I found myself rising, as the horse's fore-feet mounted a hill, and the next moment, a severe blow on the knee, showed me that I had run against either a tree or a post. Little Ball-o'-fire coming up, we examined with our hands what we could not discern with our eyes, and found that the object,

which had stopped me, and occasioned me no small pain, was a finger-post in the midst of one of the cross roads, raised on a little mound of turf.

Of no earthly use was it in our present circumstances ; and, indeed, it served a purpose for which it was certainly not intended, that of making us lose our way still farther ; for in going round it, to ascertain what it was, we missed the direction in which our horses' heads had been first turned, and which was probably the right one. We were now obliged to trust to chance entirely for our farther guidance ; and resuming the slow pace, which I had quitted to little purpose, I followed the first path which the horse chose for itself ; and, after wending slowly forward for nearly another hour, I perceived by a slight increase of light, that we had emerged from the forest. Little advantage, however, did we derive from this circumstance, for though I could see my hand when I held it up, I could not see an inch of the road over which I was travelling ; and we

were now a thousand-fold more exposed to the drifting rain and the wind, which nearly drove us off our horses.

Thus, chilled to the heart, dripping, tired, and miserable, we proceeded for another hour, with the darkness waxing and waning, according to the different opacity of the clouds that were driven fiercely over the sky. At length my eye caught a light at some distance, gleaming faintly through the loaded air. A moment after we lost it again, as we passed some low wood; but it speedily reappeared, and alternately catching it, twinkling in the distance, and missing it altogether, we rode on till it began certainly to grow nearer and more distinct. After a time, however, we again lost sight of it; and I was pushing forward in hopes of regaining it, when my horse showed a most stubborn inclination to turn to the right, and as it was the first time throughout the whole journey that I had found him steady in maintaining his own opinion, I gave him his way. I soon found that he was carrying me up a long avenue of trees; and the voluntary acceleration

of his pace gave strong evidence that he at least, perceived he was approaching some human dwelling. At length, the light again reappeared; and in a few minutes our beasts' hoofs clattered over the stones which paved the large court belonging to a handsome chateau.

For several minutes I sought about for some of the usual means of making myself heard; but not finding any, I was fain to have recourse to those which nature had furnished me withal; and I shouted as loud as I could bellow. Such sounds soon brought out some lackeys, with a lantern; and, while one, judging my quality I suppose by the vehemence of my vociferation, sprang to hold my horse, I related my plight to another, and claimed shelter and hospitality for the night.

The man replied that he would inform his master; and, after dismounting, little Ball-o'-fire and myself were shown into a large dining-room, hung with handsome tapestry, while a table laid with two covers, and a blazing fire of old beech, presented preparations for refreshment, and signs of comfort, which might have

increased our reluctance to change our lodging for the night, had we been compelled to do so by the inhospitality of the lord of the dwelling.

The servant left us by the fire, while he proceeded to a door on the other side of the hall, which being opened, he announced our arrival and condition, to some one within; describing our situation with a general enumeration of all the miseries of wet, and dirt, and fatigue, and hunger. In truth, as the man proceeded, I could not help feeling that I must present a most wretched and vagabond appearance indeed, and doubted much whether the master of the mansion, if he came forth to examine us in person, would permit such an ill-looking scoundrel as the servant pictured me, to remain a minute longer than necessary in his house.

There was a cheerful blaze of light, however, issued forth through the open door from the inner chamber, which had something in it comfortably hospitable; and I soon had the satisfaction of finding that the good lackey's description of our state and appearance had not re-

ceived the slightest attention ; for some one within who had been speaking when he entered, went on all the while ; and the cessation of the servant's voice allowed me to hear the harangue the other was addressing to some third person.

The words—" And truly, as I was saying, if there be any means of healing painful memories, you will find them in France, which is not only a garden of ever new delights, but is a garden which in itself contains a thousand fountains of consolation, of whose waters, with that exquisite liberality of feeling, for which, above all the nations upon earth, the French—What is it, François ? Is the supper ready ?—these words at once convinced me that I should meet with an acquaintance in one of the guests, if not in the master of the dwelling.

The servant told his story again, but with somewhat less minuteness ; and I heard an immediate bustle within. " A stranger !" cried the same voice. " Lost his way ! drenched in the rain ! Show him in. Bon Dieu ! why did you not show him in ? For the honour of France, which is, without any comparison, the

most hospitable country in Europe, you should not have hesitated a moment on his admission. Show him in ! show him in ! Have something more added to the supper, and light a fire in the mirror chamber."

The servant now announced, that Monsieur would be glad to see me, if I would walk forward into the cabinet beyond ; and I accordingly presented myself in a moment to my worthy acquaintance, Monsieur de Vitray. He had prepared himself with somewhat of a theatrical attitude, to receive the belated traveller ; and before he perceived who it was, he had taken two steps forward on the tip of his toe, and made two bows, the one distant and reserved, the other more familiar and courteous. But as I approached into the full light, and his memory came to his aid, he skipped forward at once, took me in his arms, and embracing me with the most overpowering demonstrations of regard, welcomed me to his chateau with, I believe, unfeigned joy.

My eyes now fell upon the person with whom he had been conversing ; and, while I replied

to my friend's civility, I had a full view of his companion, who sat with his glance fixed upon the fire, taking very little notice of what was passing around him.

He was apparently a Benedictine monk; and had doubtless been in former years a very handsome man, though there was nothing peculiarly striking in his features. His cowl was thrown back, and the shaved head, with its ring of grizzled black hair that fringed the tonsure, gave a very peculiar character to his countenance, which seemed lengthened and attenuated, by the want of the garniture with which it is furnished by nature. His beard, on the contrary, had been suffered to grow very long; and though originally as black as ink, was now thickly mingled with white hairs. In complexion he was deadly pale, and would have looked almost like a statue, had not his heavy eyebrows overhung as bright and sparkling a pair of deep black eyes as ever flashed from a human countenance. He was evidently deep in thought when we came in, and remained without rising, with his glance fixed upon the fire, while

his whole countenance assumed, from the very intensity of his gaze, a look of sternness and almost ferocity, which the features did not seem calculated to convey.

Monsieur de Vitray, after having in vain attempted to call the Benedictine's attention to an introduction he endeavoured to effect between us, urged my proceeding to the chamber he had ordered to be prepared, for the purpose of changing my dripping dress. This would not have been easily accomplished—as although I was plentifully supplied, as far as under garments went, I had not taken the pains to purchase myself a complete change of attire when I habited myself in mourning at Calais—but my worthy host accompanied me himself to my chamber, and insisted upon my putting on his black velvet morning gown, and thus descending to the supper table.

The Monk had apparently exhausted the train of thought in which he had been engaged at our first entrance, for on our return to the small cabinet in which we left him, he rose, and soon joined our conversation as a man of talent

and knowledge of the world. There was something of stern austerity, indeed, pervaded his manners ; but withal, there mingled in the webs of all his ideas, a thread of deep feeling, which gave a splendid hue to the whole texture. The secret, I believe, of exciting the sympathies of our fellow creatures, and awaking an interest for ourselves in the bosoms of others, is that alone—to feel deeply ;—not as some men do, to let our minds dance like a light waterfly on the current of all events ; but to have hearts, which, like a fine instrument, give back full and distinct tones to all that touches them, whether the chords that are struck be gay or gloomy, be tuneful or discordant.

Notwithstanding the rigour and sternness of the Benedictine's demeanour, and what appeared to me a frivolous attention to minute forms—the crossing of his breast, the long and silent prayer, the plate of herbs and the cup of cold water—yet there was a power and an intensity in all his thoughts, that commanded attention and interest. There was a degree of fancifulness too in his conversation, notwithstanding its

austere gravity, which gave it a singular and exciting character. Nothing was mentioned—not the most trifling circumstance, but had its peculiar associations in his mind; and those often so remote, and at first sight so irrelevant, that the thoughts of his hearers were obliged to labour after, startled and yet not shocked, by the rapid progress of his.

I remember two or three instances, though perhaps not the most striking ones, which occurred in the course of our conversation during that evening. We spoke of the wind, as it howled, and whistled, and rushed passed the old building, as if in anger at the massive walls which defied its power.

“In France,” said Monsieur de Vitray, “our glorious climate is so happily tempered to our benignant soil, that these gales, which happen only at the equinoxes, find our seed sown, and safely germed in the spring, and our fruits gathered, and corn granaried in the autumn. They then come to clear and purify the air for the rest of the year.”

“Hark how it howls!” said the Monk, taking

his own peculiar view as the clamorous raging of the importunate blast compelled attention to its angry murmurs. “Hark how it howls ! telling of shipwreck, and desolation, and death. Woe to the sea-tossed mariner ! Woe to the anxious and expectant wife, that waiting the sailor’s or the fisherman’s return, hears the furious voice of the tempest, trumpeting his death at the shaking door of her poor cabin ! Woe to the lordly merchant, whose wealth is on the main, and who hears in every gust the tidings of ruined speculations, and broken hopes, and bankruptcy, and shame ! Well has Satan been called the prince of the powers of the air ; and never do I hear the equinoctial blasts go howling and revelling through the pathless sky, without thinking it may be, that the evil spirits that hover round mankind, are then for a season unchained, to ride careering over the earth, and in the agony of their joy, to work their will of mischief and dismay.”

We spoke of the rain ; and I, foolishly enough, in mentioning all the annoyance it had occasioned me, loaded it with maledictions.

“Call it not accursed, my son,” said the Monk. “Oh, no! remember that every drop that falls, bears into the bosom of the earth, a quality of beautiful fertility. Remember that each glorious tree, and herb, and shrub, and flower, owes to those drops its life, its freshness, and its beauty. Remember that half the loveliness of the green world is all their gift; and that, without them, we should wander through a dull desert, as dusty as the grave. Take but a single drop of rain, cloistered in the green fold of a blade of grass, and pour upon it one ray of the morning sun—where will you get lapidary, with his utmost skill to cut a diamond, that shall shine like that? Oh no! blessed for ever be the beautiful drops of the sky, the refreshing soothers of the seared earth—the nourishers of the flowers—that calm race of beings, which are all loveliness and tranquillity, without passion, or pain, or desire, or disappointment—whose life is beauty, and whose breath is perfume.”

I would have fain heard more; for to me there was a freshness in the character of the

Benedictine, that was well worthy of more deep remark ; but, unhappily, Monsieur de Vitray did not share the same feelings, and with the one eternal current of thought, which had so channelled his mind, that I defy the strength and perseverance of Hercules to have turned the stream, he once more bore away the conversation to France. The Monk showed no signs of annoyance, whatever he felt ; but rose and retired to his chamber, leaving me to an excellent bottle of Burgundy, a more substantial supper than he had made himself, and the eternal chiming in, of Monsieur de Vitray's laud of France ; which, with reverence be it spoken, was worse than a Greek chorus.

CHAPTER XI.

THE room in which I was to pass the night was a large, old-fashioned chamber, the tapestry on which represented the triumphant return of David, after his first achievement in the death of Goliath. The future King of Israel, was represented as a fat, and empty-faced boy ; who, dancing away with most obstreperous merriment, with one leg raised so high, that the knee almost kicked his chin ; and the other, though less bent, not a little contorted — dragged along with him, a giant's head, as big as himself, sadly disfigured by a lurid spot in the middle of the forehead. After the little conqueror, came three pair of trumpeters, blowing their worsted cheeks till it

seemed as if they would have burst the hangings; and then followed an immense train of armed men, on whose faces I bestowed near half an hour's examination. Through slits, made on purpose in the tapestry, projected on each side of the room a long bracket of iron gilt, which held forth a large mirror; and in the dim light, afforded by the candles with which the chamber was furnished, I saw in these looking-glasses, whichever way I moved, four indistinct figures moving about also, in various points of view. The sight annoyed me; and as, notwithstanding my day's fatigue, I did not feel inclined to sleep, I bade little Ball-o'-fire, who had been well taken care of by the servants, cast my cloak over one of the mirrors, and something else over another; and then go to bed and sleep, in a bed closet, that opened out of the ante-chamber.

The lackey, whose place it was to attend that apartment, had piled me up a sufficient number of logs of wood, to have burned a hecatomb, had I desired it; and loading the fire with nearly half a beech tree, I sat down in a large

chair before it, and watched the flaming and hissing of the newly ignited wood, while my busy thoughts wandered far into futurity.

I thought of Emily Langleigh, and the joy she would feel at my return ; and the delight of journeying with her to Paris. And then I contemplated obtaining from my brother the renunciation which alone was required to our union ; and hope and imagination combined to picture many a bright scene of happiness to come. There were difficulties, I knew, but difficulties were made to be conquered ; and in revolving all that might occur, and laying out many a fanciful means of encountering fancied inconveniences, I passed near an hour in that sort of dreamy pensiveness, which can hardly be called thought, it is so broken and unconnected. Gradually, as I went on, the ideas became more and more indistinct ; I felt a heavy weight above my eyes ; and in short I fell asleep. My thoughts however were not totally overpowered by the dull god, though they suffered a strange metamorphosis under his influence.

I seemed to be walking with my beloved

Emily on the banks of the Rance, and talking with her on all that was happy. I could hear the tones of her sweet thrilling voice, and see the sparkling of her bright pure eyes, as if it were all reality. It seemed as if my mind was an actor, playing our two characters alternately, for in my dream, it was strange how completely she spoke as Emily Langleigh, and how completely I answered as Harry Masterton; but soon the vision became more confused: the looking-glasses were remembered; and whatever way we turned, there were four figures to be seen at an equal distance from us, imitating all our actions. Then came King David and his trumpeters; and suddenly, he cast down the head of Goliath, between Emily and myself. Without thinking, I gave it a tremendous kick, when suddenly the enormous head of the giant began rolling with fearful rapidity. The trumpeters and the armed crowd that followed, divided into two distinct bands. One gave the head a kick, and another a kick; and as complete a game of football commenced, as ever was played on a village-green upon May-day. At

length, as it flew between the two parties, with increasing speed, and I could hear the iron with which the players appeared to be covered, rattling in the scuffle; one ill-visaged fellow, with a black beard and a very tapestry sort of face, gave it a kick which sent it over towards Emily and myself. The bloody head, still retaining, notwithstanding all the blows it had received, exactly the same appearance it had in the hangings, was just about to fall upon Emily's bosom, when suddenly interposing, I received the blow upon my shoulder, with such force that I started up awake, and turned round towards the side where the game had been going on. It was towards one of the mirrors that I found myself looking, when my apprehension was fully returned, and I at once saw that my cloak had fallen off it, and might have occasioned some noise; but at the same time I perceived the reflection of another figure standing by me on the other side. Turning sharply round, I beheld the Benedictine Monk, and found that his laying his hand suddenly upon

my arm, had probably caused the sensation of something striking me.

“Thy dreams are troubled, my son,” he said, when he saw that I was fully awake. Thy limbs but now were moved ; and thy lips opening, as if the struggles of thy soul shook thy whole frame, though every fibre was chained in the heavy bonds of sleep. It must have been an evil dream.”

“Far more absurd than fearful, good father,” I replied. “But may I ask what it is gives me the pleasure of your company at this hour of night?”

“You do not remember me, then?” he said ; “but how should you? It is not natural you should—and ’tis better as it is. Would I could as readily forget myself. But who is that?” he demanded, turning towards the door, on which his glance immediately directed my eyes. The figure of my little Page gliding in, awakened by the voice of a stranger, was that which had called the Monk’s attention ; and bidding the boy return to his bed, and close the door, I remarked to the good father, that it was won-

derful he had not wakened him, as he passed through the antechamber.

“ I entered by the other door behind the tapestry,” he replied. “ But to speak of why I came, which imports more than the manner—tell me, (for you too are changed since last I beheld you,) tell me, are you not Henry, the second son of the Lord Masterton.”

I replied that I was; and at the same time I let my eye fix upon the face of the Monk, of which I had certainly some, though a very vague, recollection. But although I suffered memory to glide over the chain of events gone by, down to my very infancy, I could find no link with which my remembrance of the Benedictine connected itself. I first thought it was one person, and then another, of the few who had frequented Masterton House during my youth; but it was evident that a great change must have taken place in his countenance since I had seen him. I endeavoured then to fix the period within which he must have beheld me, by calculating how far back my appearance resembled that which I at present bore, to such

an extent, as to enable an ordinary degree of acuteness to retrace, in the young man, the features of the lad or the boy ; and I determined in my own mind, that more than six years could not have elapsed — though the shaving off my beard and mustachoes, which I have mentioned doing at Calais, had given me back my more youthful look, and made me much more like what I was some two or three years before, than I had lately appeared.

While such considerations were passing in my mind with the rapid and lightning-like progress of thought, the Monk had remained silent for a moment also, gazing at the embers of the fire, and apparently contemplating the past likewise. He raised his eyes, however, a moment after, demanding—

“ And where is your father, young gentleman, that I meet you here, travelling almost alone, in a strange country, and in a guise certainly not exactly suited to your rank ? ”

“ My father,” I replied, “ is no more ; but, excuse me if I remind you, good father, that you are asking questions somewhat freely of

one who has but a night's acquaintance with you, as far as he knows, and that too in times when every man has much that he may be willing to keep to himself, till he knows the right of any one who interrogates him."

The Monk's brow darkened for a moment, but it cleared again, and he replied:—

"You are right, young gentleman—you are right: I have no title to ask you any questions, but that acknowledged by common courtesy,—and yet you will perhaps indulge me somewhat farther than common courtesy commands, when you know that I feel a deep and personal interest in many of your transactions. There is much that I wish to know; and yet, as I have concealments myself, I feel that I am questioning without any right, even such as willingness to reciprocate confidence can give. Tell me, then, will you satisfy me? Will you grant me the explanations which I came here to seek?"

"In the scenes through which I have lately passed," I replied, "I have learned more caution—suspicion call it, if you will, good father, than ever I thought to acquire; and I must

hear the nature of the information you require, before I promise to give it."

"Well, well," said the Monk, "I think I can so frame my questions, that you may find it not difficult to answer them. Let me see,"—and he paused for a moment, while I fancied I could see him draw, as it were, a veil of art over his mind, which seemed to dim and obscure every expression of feeling in his countenance. Whether it was a sort of habitual and prejudiced suspicion of the Roman clergy, or not, I do not know, which produced that impression on my mind. Certain it is, however, that with no rational cause for such an estimation of any class of my fellow-men—without personal experience, (for I had never met with twenty papists in my life,) and merely from the vague connexion of historical facts with very doubtful anecdotes, I was accustomed to look upon the Roman Catholic priesthood as the most artful and cunning body of men that ever this world in which we live had produced. Thus I fancied I saw all the strong feelings and mighty passions, of which that Monk's heart

seemed the receptacle, disappearing from his countenance, as he judged it necessary to dissimulate—like the phantoms from some of those magic mirrors which we read of in old tales, and which showed for a moment a moving and animated scene, that faded gradually away into misty and uncertain shadows. “I would not hurt your feelings,” he continued; “but pray, if the matter be not too painful, tell me how your father died? When last I heard of him, he was in high health, and his old age itself promised to be green.”

“It did so,” I answered; “but it was not the failing of his corporeal frame by either age or sickness, which caused his death. He fell by a chance shot in an affray which took place between a body of the Parliamentary troops sent down to Masterton House, and a party of cavaliers assembled to witness my brother’s wedding.”

“Then your brother *is* married!” the Monk exclaimed, seizing my hand, and fixing on me a glance full of eagerness. “Then the Lady Emily Langleigh is his wife!”

“Not so,” I answered, though unable to conceive in the least how my brother’s marriage could so much affect my present companion. “Not so : he is still unmarried. The ceremony was broken off by the arrival of the Parliamentary soldiers, commanded by an officer of the name of Dixon.”

“Fury !” exclaimed the Benedictine, starting from his seat, and stamping his foot on the ground with all the wild intemperance of actual insanity—“fury, fury !”—And he took two or three strides up and down the chamber, with his eyes glaring, and his teeth clenched, as if unable by the strongest effort to master the passion with which he struggled. At length he paused, and, coming near me, he added, while he wiped the drops from his brow,—“Your father promised solemnly that he should wed her : why did he not force on the marriage ? How came he to die with his promise unfulfilled ?”

“Calm yourself, my good father,” I said, astonished at the dreadful agitation which I beheld, and which, in the range of calculation,

I had not the slightest means of accounting for : —“ Calm yourself, and you will see that your question savours a little of an agitated mind.”

“ Savours of madness, Sir !” he exclaimed. “ Answer my question : but no — I will be calm. Why did not your father, after your return to Devonshire, hasten your brother’s marriage with the Lady Emily ? Was there any reason ?”

“ He did hasten it, Sir,” I answered, “ as much as I suppose he thought decent and proper. I have already told you the ceremony was interrupted in the midst, by the arrival of the troops who arrested my brother.”

“ Then he stood with her at the altar ?” demanded the Monk : “ He was about to unite his fate with her’s — but was it willingly, Sir ? Did he act by no compulsion ? Did he go to the altar with his heart her’s ?”

“ I cannot answer your question,” I was replying, when he went on himself with increasing vehemence — “ Or was he part in his own arrest ? Walter Dixon ? — yet how could that

be? Yes, yes, I see it all: it was a scheme — a base scheme. Villains!” and he shook his clenched hand in the air, as if he menaced some one the object of his thoughts. Then again, casting himself on a seat, he paused, meditating for several minutes—rose again—paced the room, but with a different aspect; and, as he returned to where I sat, said, in a low and mournful voice—“I have abjured the world—cast from me such thoughts—endeavoured to forget—and yet I must, I must be satisfied. You have seen me much agitated, Captain Masterton,” he proceeded, “but you have kindly borne with my weakness, and satisfied my curiosity in some points. When I can make up my mind to give you my confidence, which some day I will do—for I feel sure that our commune will not, cannot end here—you will see that I have not been agitated without cause. In the mean time, can you tell me where your brother is?”

“I do not precisely know,” I replied; “I have returned but now from seeking him in London, whither he had been carried after his

arrest ; but I find that he has made his escape from imprisonment, and has quitted the country ; but I know not whither he went."

"Did he quit the country alone?" demanded the Monk, earnestly. "Did he quit the country alone?"

"I cannot say," I answered, not thinking myself justified, circumstanced as I was, to hint either my suspicion that Frank had betaken himself to Paris, or my conviction that he had a companion in his flight.

"You cannot say ! I believe you are deceiving me," replied the Benedictine, "and I could ask you such questions, young man, that the answers would burn upon your cheeks, if you refused them utterance with your lips. But I will not."

"I think I should know how to treat any man who dared to ask me such questions," I replied ; "I am happy therefore, Sir, that you think fit to abstain."

"Nay, nay, young gentleman," said the other, in a calmer tone ; "I have spoke this night more angrily than I ought—God forgive

me!—more angrily, more sinfully, than my calling or my faith should have permitted. I have no right—I know I have no right; and yet let me ask one question more. Know ye where Walter Dixon may be found; for to him, all villain as he is, must I apply for farther tidings.”

In regard to Walter Dixon, no such scruples affected me, as had prevented me from being more explicit in regard to my brother; and I replied at once, not perceiving the conclusion at which he would arrive, “that he was probably in Paris; as thither he had purposed to direct his steps, when I had passed the channel in the same boat with him from England.

“In Paris!” said the Monk. “In Paris! It is strange! Then probably your brother is there too, for he will not lose sight of him easily. But tell me: have I been deceived? or is it true, that when you marched with a regiment raised by yourselves, from Devonshire to Kent, at Amesbury you were met by Walter Dixon, who conducted you to a village called Penford-bourne, and there left

you? and was it not he that advised your stay, till you heard farther from your party?"

To find in a stranger, such a minute knowledge of what had passed on our march, it may be easily supposed astonished me not a little. I replied, however, that his statement was correct; and he proceeded—

"Did he not, after counselling your halt there, furnish you with—But, no, no, no!" he added, with a quivering lip and an agitated voice—"No, no! I can ask no farther, in the tone that now becomes me;" and he again paced the room with quick and irregular steps, muttering to himself: "I had hoped that this had all passed by; but the fit comes upon me again. Yet I will be calm."

After a few minutes, spent in an evident struggle to tranquillize feelings that had mastered judgment and even habitual control, the Benedictine resumed his seat, and inquired in a more easy tone, whither I now proposed to turn my steps.

"I am now," I replied, willing to see whether he would open himself more in regard to

my dear Emily, in whom he seemed to take so deep and strange an interest; and fearless of betraying her into any danger, when I was near to protect her—"I am now about to rejoin the Lady Emily Langleigh, and her cousin Lady Margaret, who wait my return in Brittany; but our after movements must be determined by circumstances."

"Then the Lady Emily," he demanded, "is really in Brittany, as we heard?"

"She is so! I replied. "Yet I cannot conceive who could have given you the information; for I should imagine her situation and name were of too little interest in this part of the world, to be the subject of even occasional gossip."

"It matters not how the tidings spread," he answered. "Suffice it that they are true; and right happy am I to hear them confirmed by your lips. Nevertheless, as you seem in some sort her guardian for the time, till your brother can be found, have a care of her in France. It is a light and idle country in some things, where men think that the vain folly, which

they emptily fancy to be love, is a homage which every woman expects at their hands, and you must guard her for your brother."

"There might be matter of serious offence in that speech," I replied, avoiding the subject, "were it repeated in the ears of good Monsieur de Vitray."

"Not so," replied the Monk ; "we have been acquainted with each other from youth ; and he knows that I am not one to flatter even his weakness. He is an excellent man ; but in the brain of every human being there is one tender point—touch which, and he is insane. Happy the man whose madness falls upon some prejudice common to a number of his fellow creatures. Monsieur de Vitray is a living caricature of the whole French nation, who have undoubtedly many excellent qualities peculiarly their own, and have amongst them a full and fair proportion of those admirable beings of all classes, who, in heart or in talent, in wit or in understanding, rise above the general level of humanity. They have, however, their share of foibles too ; and amongst those foibles, that

which in Monsieur de Vitray has deviated into madness, is not the least. But still as every nation must have its weakness, I do not know that, if the choice were left to ourselves, we could fix upon one that would do less evil, and more good, than national vanity."

"I do not then speak with a Frenchman," I replied, "and, indeed, from all that has passed this night, I cannot but conclude that in you, I see a countryman of my own."

"A monk has no country," he answered, with a melancholy smile. "When we abjure all worldly things, we abjure that amongst the rest; but yet the relaxation of our rigorous rules extends to that too; and, as I, who ought to walk on foot, and never quit my convent or its garden but on some religious or charitable purpose, now keep an ambling mule to travel through the country, I believe there will be no great sin in owning, that I am by birth an Englishman, though the greater part of my life I have passed in France or Italy."

I was glad to find the conversation now turned to more general subjects; on which the Monk

spoke with calmness, and wherein I could bear a part with freedom ; but he did not indulge in it long ; and, rising almost immediately, he excused himself for having intruded into my chamber, and broken in upon my hours of repose. “ You may see,” he added, “ that I had deep and painful motives for infringing common rules. However, something tells me that we shall yet see much more of each other. I think you will soon find it necessary, or convenient, to bend your steps towards Paris. I go there also ; and if, at the Benedictine house in the quartier St. Jacques, you will ask for Dom. André, you will find one who will rejoice to see you. Good night ! and pleasanter dreams than that which I interrupted.”

Thus saying, he left me, and retired by a door behind the tapestry, which led out, like the one through the anti-chamber, to the principal corridor of the chateau.

He left me—notwithstanding all that had passed, or rather in consequence of all that had passed—both pleased and interested. I had seen deep feelings struggling in the bosom of a

human creature, and gaining even the temporary mastery of a fine and high-toned mind: but I had seen them nobly combated and finally subdued. I had now beheld him calm, and I had beheld him agitated; but in every state there was a flashing forth of a bright and commanding spirit, whose powers were rather restrained than exerted. In his demeanour there was much dignity, with perhaps a touch of pride; but the whole was softened and harmonized by the expression of sorrows and anxieties, common to the lowliest of intelligent beings, and by pleasures and enjoyments, derived from the simplest and purest objects in the world around us.

I felt that he was a man who might exercise a great, perhaps a dangerous command over my mind; and I saw that with strong passions—passions which had in them a touch of almost frenzied energy, there was a power of concealing, if not of governing them, which, though only exerted for a moment, was evidently the offspring of ancient habits. Who was he? was the question naturally before me; but the more

I revolved it in my mind, the farther I seemed from its solution. From his anxiety for Emily, I almost believed him a relation; and yet I had never heard of any others that she had still living but the Lady Margaret. That excellent woman and her husband stood, during his life, in the same relationship to Emily and to each other; but Sir Thomas Langleigh had been long dead. I next strove to confirm the supposition of the Monk's connexion with her by blood, by recalling his features and hers, and seeking for a resemblance. There was none on earth to be found, and wearied and at fault, I cast off my clothes, and laid myself down to rest.

CHAPTER XII.

I ROSE early in the morning, with the intention of proceeding as speedily as possible. The storm of the preceding evening had passed away, the wind had fallen, the rain had ceased; and the sun was looking out brightly over a world glistening with the drops of the past night. To my imagination, as I had ridden along the dark and weary road which had led me thither, the chateau of good Monsieur de Vitray had appeared seated in the midst of gloomy wilds, and black and sombre forests; and I could scarcely believe my eyes when I found it surrounded by a rich and smiling country, covered with fields already bearing promise of the next year's harvest, and

young plantations of beautiful wood, glowing with all the bright varieties of autumn.

I found the worthy proprietor, robed in a flowered silk dressing-gown, (for I had appropriated his velvet one,) and busily engaged in the cultivation of his garden, which boasted, even at that season, in its various trim and regular parterres, a great number of beautiful flowers.

“ My dear young gentleman,” he cried, after the first salutation of the morning was over, “ I was just now examining these flowers, after last night’s tempest ; and really, every time I come into my garden, my wonder, my admiration, and my thankfulness, are excited towards God, for his infinite goodness to this my native country. Gracious Heaven ! should we not have had full reason to be contented, if when the Creator destined France to be the garden of fine wits and noble hearts — the flower-bed of generous spirits and scientific minds — if he had even denied to our soil and climate, what he bestowed upon our understanding, and had left us in a poor and arid country,

with only half the natural productions that he gave to other lands? but now, now, my young friend, what ought to be our gratitude, when, not only as a race of men we produce those who far excel all the heroes and demigods of antiquity in courage and warlike skill — who render the names of Pyrrhus, and Hannibal, Scipio, Cæsar, Camillus, and Cocles, forgotten; and those also who might well dare the forum or the academic grove to bring forward aught comparable in eloquence or philosophy — what ought to be our gratitude to Heaven, I say, when not only our country produces such a race as this, but when it is gifted with a soil and a climate that excel those of any other land?”

There are some speeches to which it is very difficult to reply, and those of good Monsieur de Vitray were generally of that class. Happily, however, he required very little answer; and, quite satisfied with his own reasonings upon the subject, he did not desire to hear those of any one else. The gaping admiration of two gardeners who followed him, nevertheless seem-

ed to afford him both pleasure and encouragement; for I remarked, that though his speech was addressed to me, he so contrived to turn himself, that not a word of it was lost by those on whom he doubtless believed it would have more instructive effect. Happily, a little cough that he had caught gave occasional intervals; and after he had gone on some way farther than I have thought necessary to record, and had told me that he was busily writing a book to be called "*Les Delices de la France*,"* I obtained an opportunity, thanks to a fit of coughing, to tell him of my intention of proceeding immediately.

He would not hear, however, of my going before breakfast; and in turning back to the house, we were met by the Benedictine, who saluted me with kindness and courtesy, but took no notice of our interview during the night. He was grave and thoughtful, but his

* A copy of this book, which is now very scarce, is in possession of the transcriber of these pages, for the gift of which he begs to return his thanks to the donor.

appearance exhibited no traces of the agitation which he had displayed ; and as I looked back to what had passed at our last meeting, I could hardly believe it to be aught but a dream.

After breakfast, when I rose to take my departure, Monsieur de Vitray declared he would accompany me a few leagues on the way ; and the Benedictine also ordered his mule to be brought, with the purpose of joining our party. It was a spirited animal, and nearly as beautiful and swift as a horse ; and I could not but remark, that the Monk rode with much more of a military than an ecclesiastical air. Our conversation was of indifferent subjects, as far as Monsieur de Vitray would suffer them to be so ; but I thought I perceived, that when the lead was in the Benedictine's hands, if I may so express myself, he endeavoured as much as was in his power to gather more information on the subject of his former inquiries, without however appearing to do so.

Of course Monsieur de Vitray kept his ground ; but the Monk often contrived to turn

the topic started by his friend in another direction, and skilfully brought it round to the matters which occupied his own mind.

“ Egypt, Greece, and Italy, my young friend,” said Monsieur de Vitray, with an air of kind instruction, “ each pretended in turn to be the mother of the Sciences and the dwelling-place of the Muses; but you may still easily see, that none of these climates was destined to be ultimately the abode of the arts, for each lost them in turn; and gradually they fixed their abode in France, which now, when Helicon and Parnassus are forgotten, shows herself clearly the school of sciences, the mountain of the muses, and the asylum of the arts.”

“ All this,” said the Benedictine, “ I should scarcely suppose our young friend had yet had time to examine. Pray how long is it since you first arrived in France ?”

“ Not quite a month,” I replied, “ and a part of that time I have spent in again returning to England, so that very little of my time has been given to observation of the country in which I now am.”

Monsieur de Vitray was about to join in ; but the Benedictine stopped him by a question which excited all his attention. “ Though you have been such a short time in France,” he said, “ pray inform us which of the two countries you as yet like best.”

The question was difficult to answer with *bienséance* ; but the Monk almost instantly relieved me, by adding — “ Yet first tell us what part of England, as far as you have seen, you prefer, in order that we may judge of your taste.”

He spoke with a smile, as if amused at parrying Monsieur de Vitray’s harangues ; and I replied — “ I have been so little out of Devonshire, that I can hardly judge of the rest of England any more than I can judge of France ; yet from all that I have seen, I should say that I prefer my native county.”

“ Association—all association, my dear Sir,” replied the Monk. “ That is your place of memories, Devonshire ; there, for you, are stored up all the sweet recollections of youth ; and, depend upon it, wherever you go—whether

your life be a dream of fortunate enjoyment, like that of some men who have their good things here—or whether your journey through existence be laid amidst a long desert of disappointments and regrets, like mine—to that place shall turn your eyes with a lingering love, that nothing can remove; if your path be amongst bright things, you shall still think of that land, as the sweetest spot in Tempe; and if you find the world a wilderness, there the oasis of your imagination shall be laid.”

“Nevertheless,” said Monsieur de Vitray, “any one who uses his reason, must find such a combination of charms and perfections—such an accumulation of beauties and excellences—so much to admire, and so much to love in France, that he cannot but allow, that though there may be many spots that are extremely beautiful—though there are many that are extremely delightful, the palm must be given to France.”

“But this young gentleman has not yet had an opportunity of judging all its qualities,” replied the Monk; “and indeed, I will not have you, my son, forestall the enjoyment of disco-

vering them for himself, especially as he will most likely proceed to Paris, where, as you acknowledge yourself, the cream—the excellence of all the enjoyments, even of France, is to be found. I think you propose going thither ?” he added, as a question to me.

“Such indeed is my intention,” I replied. “But so many things may occur to alter that determination, that I dare scarcely count upon it myself with any feeling of certainty.”

“I shall count upon it, however,” replied the Monk; “for I shall hope to have the pleasure of meeting you in that city, my son. Will you not promise me a visit at my cell? In good sooth, some society, different from the dull routine of monastic life, is necessary to relieve the literary labours of us poor Benedictines.”

I willingly promised to visit the Monk, if I ever proceeded as far as Paris; and indeed he had contrived to interest me so highly, to ally himself to so many of my thoughts and feelings, in the short time we had been acquainted, that the prospect of seeing him again, was like the taking up of some book of great

power, where at every page we expect to find something new, and striking, and relative to ourselves as human beings.

I believe too, that to create great interest in the bosom of any of our fellow-creatures, it is necessary strongly to excite the imagination; it little matters by what means. This, the Benedictine had done in regard to myself, more than any man I had ever met. The knowledge he had of myself and my family, the deep and extraordinary feelings by which he seemed affected towards us, and my utter ignorance of him and all his affairs, stimulated me to know more; and, at once, excited and baffled my curiosity. At the same time his strong and original mind—the powerful and uncontrollable working of his heart, and the cares and sorrows to which he occasionally alluded, with the strong traces that every moment appeared of fine and noble sentiments, engaged my better feelings in his behalf, and gave me an inclination to love as well as to admire him.

He reined in his mule as he spoke the last

words I have mentioned ; and after receiving my promise to visit him in Paris, he prayed for every happiness on my way ; and giving me his benediction, left me to pursue my path with Monsieur de Vitray, who proposed to accompany me another league.

When the Monk was gone, I endeavoured to gain some information concerning him from my companion ; but whether intentionally, or merely in the common course of his mental dreams, I do not know, Monsieur de Vitray sheltered himself from all questions under the glories of France. He did speak for a moment, it is true, upon the subject of his friend ; but he darted off again almost immediately. He had known great sorrows, he said ; and had sought relief from painful reflection in devoting himself to religion. He had first become a member of the society of Jesus ; but finding that the more worldly avocations which the regulations of the Jesuits not only permitted but required, necessarily involved him in transactions and scenes, which recalled all that was painful in the world he sought to

quit, he had embraced the rule of St. Benedict in its mildest form, and had already in the seclusion of the cloister, and the pursuits of literary acquirement, gained far more tranquillity, than he had known for several years before. “Nevertheless,” continued Monsieur de Vitray, “as you see, all the seductive charms which adorn the land he has chosen for his place of residence, induce him to quit from time to time the shadow of his monastery, the superior of which is a kind and liberal man, and does all that he consistently can, to render devotion sweet. Dom André, indeed, does not acknowledge that the beauty that he sees round him, and the excellence that is exposed to his eye in every direction, are the sole motives that lead him forth again into the world. He says that it is a wandering disposition—a mind shaken and injured by the sorrows he has encountered. Nay more, he sometimes sportively denies to France all the merit which she possesses; but he does it but to oppose me, for a moment; for can there be on earth a man so utterly blind, as not to perceive that France is the paradise

of earthly delights — the theatre of honour and glory — the school of arts and sciences — the land of men of genius and learning — the native place of abundance and beauty — and the temple of fame and immortality ?”

I could certainly have furnished him with an instance of a man so blind ; but I refrained from opposing a doctrine, in which good Monsieur de Vitray was so bigoted a devotee ; and he remained irrecoverably plunged in France, till we reached the point where he was to leave me. There we parted with many thanks on my side for his hospitality and kindness ; and on his, many expressions of affection and regard. He made his horse caracol and curvette in the true style of the manège, as he took leave ; and I, with a beast whose graces were all untaught, if he had any, pursued my way towards Dinan.

I had now, had I desired it, a subject of contemplation in regard to the Monk, wherewith to diversify the somewhat engrossing thoughts of my approaching meeting with Emily. I required no other ideas, however, than those,

and indeed the Benedictine would speedily have been forgotten, had there not been a continual link of connexion between all that had passed in our private conversation, and the image of the dear girl towards whom I was so eagerly bending my steps. His inquiries had related to her—in her marriage with my brother he had taken evidently a deep and extraordinary interest—and my imagination conjured up a thousand vague and unreal ways of accounting for that interest, and those inquiries, none of which proved true eventually, though some of them, and those the very wildest, came in a degree near truth.

I rejected them all, however, one by one; and I looked forward with no small eagerness to the explanation which I doubted not Emily herself could give me. I knew of no relation she had in France, it was true. I had never heard of any such person as the Benedictine: but then I remembered how little I had heard of Lady Margaret, before I had seen her, though I had found since, that she had kept up a constant correspondence with my father,

on the subject of our dear Emily, and a broken one with Emily herself. The same might have happened in another instance—I might even have seen the Benedictine in former days; and certainly his face haunted my memory, as some indistinct countenance that we see in a dream, the likeness of some one we know well, and yet not precisely the same. Emily, however, I doubted not, could and would explain all; and onward I hastened, as fast as I could go, towards the place of her dwelling.

I must now speak of my constant companion, little Ball-o'-fire, who had ridden on beside me with more than his usual taciturnity. Fancying that the boy was what is commonly called sulky, on account of the sharp manner I had sent him back to his bed on the preceding night, while the Benedictine was speaking with me, I tried in the first instance to win him by gentleness from his silent mood; but, finding that he still answered in monosyllables, I took upon me to lecture him for his supposed moodiness.

“It is not that—it is not that,” replied the

Page; "but the man puzzles me, and I do not love to be puzzled."

"What man?" I demanded. "Of whom are you speaking?"

"The man with the shaved head and the long black gown," he answered. "I have seen him before somewhere, as sure as I live; and I never yet saw the face that I could not remember, till I saw his. I should like to see him with a Geneva skull-cap. He is mighty like some Presbyterian chaplain. Is he an Englishman?"

I answered in the affirmative; and asked the boy if he could not by any collateral circumstance call to mind where he had seen him.

"Then you do not know who he is either?" rejoined the lad sharply. "If he be an Englishman, why did he never speak English? He wants to conceal himself; but if I had been in the house another day, I would have found him out."

"But how?" I demanded, "have you any clue? Do you suspect any one?"

"No!" replied the boy. "No; I do not

exactly suspect. But did you never, when you wanted to remember some place, or some thing, or some object—did you never find the name floating about in some dark corner of your brain, and to be dragged to light by no means, though you knew it as well, as that which your godfathers insist on your carrying to your grave whether you will or not? When you have sat over a bowl of well-spiced mum, did you never see a bit of cinnamon floating upon the top, and try to skim it off with the ladle, while every time you thought you had it sure, it whirled away to another part of the dish, and left you with but a ladle-full of liquid? Well, so does the memory of that man's face serve me, when I want to catch it firmly. There it is before me, swimming about upon the past as clear as the sun, till I strive to get hold of it, and see what it is exactly, but then it whirls away, and leaves me as wise as I was before."

I had seldom, if ever, heard my little companion spend so many words on any subject; and as he showed an evident inclination after-

wards to meditate over the matter of his doubts in silence, I could not do less than humour his disposition so far as letting him hold his peace. Thus we proceeded without farther communication during the greater part of the day ; and towards eight o'clock at night, reached the foot of the high hill on which Dinan stands. It being my intention to take up my abode for the time in the higher part of the town, I directed my horse's steps up the steep road that winds along under the walls ; and, although the gates were shut, by using the infallible means which opens all doors, I procured admittance, and proceeded to the chief inn of the place.

As it was somewhat beyond convent hours, and I had no wish to scandalize the good abbess, or rather, I believe, prioress of the convent, where Emily boarded, I was fain to remain at the auberge all night ; and some of the sweetest, yet most sleepless hours, that I can remember, did I pass. My journey was over ; I was again near the being whom I loved more than any thing else on earth—the dangers were gone—the difficulties overcome ; and hope and joy

were all that was before me. Imagination did her fairy work most splendidly, as in the calm silent hours of the night, I lay and fancied all the delight of the morrow's meeting. I imagined every look—I called up every feature—I saw the bright light shining from those beautiful eyes, that always seemed to me to overflow with soul. I heard the magic words of welcome spoken in the thrilling tones of joy; and sleep—dull, heavy, death-like sleep, could have nothing to do with such living hopes as these.

It was in vain I tried to close my eyes; and yet, after having given two or three hours to such blessed meditations, I tried hard to banish thought, even though it should be replete with the anticipation of pleasure, and to give myself up to slumber.

In the midst I caught the sound of a deep heavy bell, swinging slowly through the silent air; and distant noises convinced me that something unusual was taking place in the town. In a moment afterwards, I heard a number of quick steps running under my window, and the cry,

"Au feu ! au feu !" instantly showed me that some accidental fire was the occasion of the alarm. Hurrying on my clothes, I ran to the street with that curious sort of presentiment of evil, which often breaks in upon our happiest dreams. The moment I reached the open air, the glare of the flames rising from the lower town, showed me the direction of the burning buildings, and following a multitude of persons, who were hastening to render assistance, I ran on, every step bringing me nearer and nearer the convent, in which I had left Lady Margaret and Emily. Oh, how my heart beat, and my speed increased, as I came within a few streets of the fire, and saw that it was evidently in the immediate vicinity, if not in the very dwelling of her I loved. At length I heard one of those who were running like myself ask a man who was standing coolly at the corner of the street where the fire was.

"C'est chez les Dames Ursulines," replied the man, without moving ; but the name of the very convent made me bound forward like

lightning; and in a moment after I was before the mass of tottering walls and blazing rafters, which had lately surrounded my Emily. There was an immense crowd on every side, standing at a most respectful distance as usual on such occasions, and doing little or no service; while two or three, more vain or more courageous, were approaching nearer, commanding and exhorting the others, with all the insolence of hurry and bustle, and doing more harm than good.

I, however, had but one object—I had but one thought; and without staying to inquire what had become of the inmates of the convent, I burst through the crowd, tumbled over a man who would fain have directed me what to do, and rushed into the midst of the building, by the door that led to the parlour. There was nothing around me but falling beams, and smoking ruins, and a stifling atmosphere of heat and smoke. My breath was nearly stopped—my hands and face seemed scorched; and as I went reeling and tottering over the piles of burning wood, and slates, and plaster, that

blocked up the path, fresh gusts of smoke almost deprived me of my sight also. I made my way on, notwithstanding, through the passages which arched with stone, in most places, had suffered less from the fire than the rest of the building; but when I issued out into the main body of the convent, and looked up, I saw that the roof had fallen in, and that farther search was vain.

Like one mad, I believe, in appearance, and certainly like one mad as far as sensation went, I issued forth from the burning ruins; and as the crowd made way for me to pass, I asked in a few hurried words what had become of the nuns. "They are all safe! they are all safe!" cried two or three voices, with the gladdest sounds that had ever reached my ear. They are all safe, and at the house of the ladies of St. Benedict farther down the street."

There might still be a doubt however, and making my way to the convent of the Benedictines, I knocked loudly at the door. The old portress, who answered my summons, seem-

ed little disposed to give me any farther information, than that all the ladies of the other convent were safe, and taking some repose after their alarm.

“ Was she sure ?” I asked ; “ quite sure ?”

“ Yes, yes !” she answered, “ as sure as that St. Benedict is a saint in Heaven !”

“ And the lady boarders ?” I demanded ; “ Are you sure that they also are all safe—none hurt—none missing ?”

“ Answer him ! answer him, Sister Martha !” said a friar, who had come up behind me, and saw the crabbed reluctance of the old dame to be troubled farther with my questions. “ Answer him. He has some relation amongst them. I saw him go through the fire just now, as if he were mad, looking to see if any had been left.”

“ Well, well,” she said ; “ I have no objection to tell him if he would take an answer. They are all safe ; I heard the lady prioress go over all their names, professed sisters and novices, and lay sisters and boarders, and there

was not one missing or hurt. And now, young man, go home and sleep. That is the best thing you can do."

So saying, she shut the door; and, as far satisfied as I could be, I thanked the friar for his interference, and turned towards my inn, but certainly not to sleep.

CHAPTER XIII.

NOTHING but the actual sight of Emily Langleigh would have fully convinced me of her safety ; and imagination, as if to compensate all the pleasant dreams which she had provided for me during the earlier part of the night, proved herself the most ingenious of tormentors, from the time I returned to the auberge, till the dawning of the next morning. Even then I felt that some time must still pass before I could with propriety present myself at the convent : and suspense might have endured for an hour longer, had it not been at once changed to more painful apprehensions, by my little follower, who crept into my chamber almost as soon as it was light. I had, in truth, quite

forgot the boy in the hurry and agitation of the moment ; but he now returned quite out of breath, and alarmed me by the very haste which sparkled in his eyes.

“ She is not there ! ” he said, as he entered.
“ The Lady Emily is not at the convent.”

“ Are you sure, boy ? ” I demanded, almost wild with apprehension. “ How do you know ? ”

“ Because I have been there but now,” he replied, “ and have seen all the nuns and every one else, go to matins in the chapel, and she was not amongst them.”

I flew, rather than ran, to the convent of the Benedictine nuns ; and hastening in, as I knew that the portress was most likely unacquainted with the names of the new guests in their convent, I asked to speak with the Prioress of the Ursulines.

After detaining me for nearly half an hour, in a state of suspense and anxiety beyond description, the old lady appeared at the grate ; and asked what I wished with her. She evidently did not remember me in my changed

garb; but a few words only were requisite to explain to her my business and my anxieties; and replying simply, "No, no, they are quite safe," she told me, that if I would go round, she would order me to be admitted to the parlour.

To the parlour I then went, with a load taken off my heart; but to my surprise, I found the superior of the Ursulines, with the chief of the Benedictines alone. I seated myself in some surprise, though I evidently saw from the smiling countenance of both the ladies that they could have no very serious calamity to announce. In the first instance, as a matter of course, the Prioress gave a few words to their blessed deliverance of the former night, and then went on to tell me, that long before that, the ladies I sought were gone.

"Gone!" I exclaimed, almost starting from my seat. "Gone! and pray, lady, can you inform me where they are gone to?"

"I know no more than yourself, my son," replied the old lady; "but has not sister Bridget, the portress, given you the letter they

left for you? Nay, but I forgot that she is not portress here, and therefore you have not seen her. Well, she shall be called."

Sister Bridget was accordingly summoned; and entered with many a lowly reverence to her superiors; but the moment she set eyes upon me, she exclaimed; "Bon St. François! It is the English gentleman; and he will be wanting the letter, and my coffre was burned last night in the fire."

"And the letter was in it?" I asked, "and is burned also? Is it so?"

"Nay, do not look so fierce, Monsieur," replied the old woman. "I could not help it. It was no fault of mine. I did not set the place on fire on purpose to burn your letter; not I."

I assured her that I was not fierce, as she called it, though vexed and embarrassed; but she had got the advantage of having something to complain of, and she kept it, going on—"You need not frown at me, indeed; I would not have had my own things burned, if I could have helped it: there was the silver cross, which had been blessed by our holy Father the

Pope; and the tooth of St. Denis; and my beads from Loretto; and many a thing that I would fain have saved sooner than your letter; letter indeed! no great thing, I warrant; what would it signify if twenty such were burned?"

I thought I should have gone mad; and I do believe that such would have been the consummation, if the Prioress had not ordered that dreadful old woman to leave the room, which she did, grumbling the whole way, as if she had suffered the misfortune, and not I, "Letter indeed! tooth of St. Denis, worth a thousand of it!" till the door closed behind her.

"The letter is lost, my son," said the Prioress, "and as it cannot be recovered from the element which has devoured it, you should not make yourself unhappy on that score. What between our own faults, and our own mistakes, if we grieve but for those things which can be amended, we shall have enough to do."

"But, my dear lady," I replied, "you do not seem to understand the full value of that letter; for here in a strange country, with no possible clue to guide me, how shall I discover

those dear connexions, who are now separated from me; if, as you say, you can give me no information concerning their present abode?"

"None can I give, my son," replied the superior; "but I think they spoke of Paris. Yet, surely, before you parted, you must have arranged some means of learning each other's movements, in that wide horrible place the world. I would not tread it for a month alone, without some one to guide me, to be Abbess of Clairvaux."

"When I left them, lady," I replied, "I had not the most distant idea that they would change their dwelling ere my return. I was always sure to find your community somewhere; and I never doubted that I should have found the Lady Margaret and the Lady Emily with you. Can you not favour me by any explanation of the motives which induced them to leave your house, before my return from England?"

"What reasons the gentleman gave, I cannot tell," replied the Prioress. "But certainly

he seemed to have a very great influence over them."

"Whom do you mean, lady? What gentleman?" I exclaimed, in unmingled astonishment. "I know of no gentleman who ought to guide their movements, but myself."

"They seemed to think differently, my son," replied the Prioress, apparently getting tired of the conversation; "for they left my care under his protection: and set out in a carriage, provided for them by him; that is all I can tell you."

Could it be my brother? I asked myself, though the very question was agony. Could it be my brother; and could Emily really have gone away under his guidance? Gracious Heaven! was it possible? "Was he young or old, madam?" I demanded, with as much calmness as I could assume.

"He was neither far advanced in life, nor yet to be called young," replied the superior. "He was probably my own age, or thereabout."

If the first part of the good lady's answer had almost made me despair, the second, though it left me as much in doubt as ever, took from my mind the sting of jealousy at least ; and I proceeded to ask several more questions, concerning the stranger ; and also in regard to the period at which he had first made his appearance.

“ You question somewhat rudely and somewhat long, my son,” replied the lady of the Ursulines, giving way to her impatience. “ I will now tell you all about it in my own way, and with that you must be satisfied, for I will not submit to be catechised, as if I were before a synod. About a week since, the gentleman I speak of, came to the grate and demanded to see the Lady Margaret Langleigh ; and she being a boarder, he was conducted to the parlour. After a long conversation alone, the Lady Emily was sent for ; and shortly after, having finished the devotions in which I was engaged, I also went into the parlour. I found the younger lady all in tears ; but they were evidently not tears of sorrow ; and the gentle-

man, who was a person of great courtesy and elegance, then told me it was his intention to take away the ladies with him the next day, adding ; “ This diamond, madam, I beg you to accept, for the kindness and attention you have shown them ; and though I know the gauds and baubles of this world are forbidden to you, who set your thoughts and wishes upon crowns of glory and imperishable goods ; yet let me beg you to employ it as you may judge best.”

The good Prioress, as she related this circumstance, gave a slight bridling toss of her head, with a glance at the superior of the friendly convent, and then instantly proceeded. “ Well, when he was gone, I did ask the Lady Emily and the Lady Margaret also, who the stranger was ; but there seemed to me some mystery, and as I have no curiosity for things of the world, I of course inquired no farther. Nor was the portress able to discover, though she asked very carefully, nor could Father Antoine, our holy director, find out who the stranger was ; and yet having some business at the inn, where the other lodged, he inquired accident-

ally, if the aubergiste knew him. The next day, at noon, the stranger came again with a carriage and grey horses, in which he carried away the two ladies, who left a letter for you with the portress. Had they chosen to confide it to me, doubtless it might have been cared for; but they did as they pleased, and that is all I can tell you, young gentleman."

"If you knew, madam, how much I am concerned in all that has passed," I replied, "and what embarrassment and anxiety the loss of this letter causes me, I am sure you would, in Christian charity, give me every information which could lead me to trace the dear friends I have lost."

"Oh, I am willing—quite willing to tell you any thing I know, my son," answered the old lady; but I saw that some offence had been given, probably by the reserve which Emily and Lady Margaret had displayed; and I therefore contented myself with asking if the stranger were an Englishman or a Frenchman.

"Oh, a Frenchman, he appeared, certainly," replied the superior. "He was so courteous

and polite. Yet he might have a little accent too," she added, "though he spoke French like a native."

As it was evident that I was to expect no farther information, I now rose, and taking leave, returned to my inn in a state of mind not easy to conceive. Casting myself down on a seat, I leaned my head upon the table, and endeavoured to collect and arrange my ideas; but for some time my brain remained in such a state of inextricable confusion, between want of sleep, agitation, alarm, and suspense, that no idea remained clear and precise before my mind for a single instant. The boy stood near, and gazed upon me wistfully, as if he would fain have asked the tidings which I had obtained; and, at length, I gave him in a quick and hurried manner, a sketch of what I had learned.

"Is that all!" he cried, bounding towards the door, with that rapidity of conclusion and action which he had learned in the camp. "Is that all? I thought they were all dead! Oh, we shall soon find them;—a carriage must be a

rare thing in a town like this; and we shall trace it along the road as easily as a slow hound follows his game." So saying, he darted away. Remembering, however, that he had scarcely an idea of the language of the country, but what he had been able to acquire on the road, I hastened after him, and overtook him in the inn yard. He had already collected round him half a dozen hostlers and grooms and drawers; and, with a piece of chalk, was busily sketching on the wall, a very tolerable representation of a carriage and horses; while he tried by sundry words and broken phrases of mixed French and English, to make them comprehend his desire to know where the vehicle he pourtrayed had gone.

My coming put an end to such elaborate procedure; and following the course the boy had suggested, I demanded whether a gentleman had put up there about six or seven days previously, with a carriage and two grey horses. To an immediate reply in the affirmative, was joined the information, that he had four instead of two grey horses, and was accom-

panied by two stout fellows on horseback, from which I augured more news still; as how much soever the master might be given to taciturnity, it was more than probable that one or other of his lackeys had been more communicative, and given some account of their journey, or their dwelling, or their designs; which might furnish a clue to their route. In this I was disappointed. Every one remembered the carriage, and the horses, and the gentleman, and his servants; but every one also remembered that never had such a reserved party entered the gates of the *Cheval blanc*, and all assured me that not one word had passed the lips of any of them concerning their object or intentions, except when on one occasion, the younger of the grooms declared that he hoped soon to see Paris again. This, however, was some news, and my next questions tended to ascertain the appearance of the master of these horses and grooms; but on this subject, the servants of the inn referred me to the aubergiste himself, as more eloquent than themselves; and to him I consequently made application.

The gentleman, the aubergiste said, who possessed the coach, was somewhere between fifty and sixty, perhaps dipped in his fifty-fifth year. He was sober in his habit; and wore a coat the colour of vin de Medoc, garnished with silver; he was tall, muscular, and florid in complexion. He was gay and sparkling, too, in manner, the innkeeper farther said, larded his conversation now and then with a *bon mot*, or a good story, but never spoke of himself by any chance, and though he ate but sparingly, he drank in reason, and always of the best.

This account left me as wise as I was before; for no one within the sphere of my personal recollection bore the slightest resemblance to the person here described, that is to say, as far as the innkeeper's description differed from that which might have been given of any other individual of the human race. Doubtful, anxious, and perplexed, a choice of difficulties lay before me. Beyond all question, Emily's letter which had been destroyed, would have given me directions where to find her, and would also have

explained the circumstances under which she had left the asylum that I had chosen for her ; but, at the same time, she would of course expect me to follow whither she had gone ; and might or might not write again, to ensure my knowledge of her abode. If I left the town, any letter she sent, might again be lost ; and if I remained to wait for more news, I might lose all trace of her farther journey. Where there is but a choice of evils before an anxious mind, I believe the one which implies inactivity will be always rejected ; and I determined at all risks to seek Emily Langleigh in Paris. As far as possible, however, to guard against the risk of missing any communication she might direct to me, I placed two pieces of gold in the aubergiste's hands, telling him to make inquiries every day of the portress of the Ursuline nuns, for any letters which might be there left for me ; and in the case of the arrival of any, to forward it to me by a courier, to an inn I had heard my father mention, in the immediate vicinity of the Place Royale. If I re-

ceived none, I told him, that I should return at the end of two months, and claim my forty-eight livres, but if he forwarded any to me, I bade him keep the money as a reward; and promised to pay the expenses of the messenger. His own interest was thus bound to my side; and forty-eight livres is a sum which a French innkeeper does not despise, nor an English one either.

My next proceeding was to acquire the most complete and accurate knowledge that it was possible to obtain, of the carriage, the horses, the liveries. The aubergiste described the coach with the most minute precision; the garçon d'écurie informed me of every spot upon the horses' skins; and the fille de cuisine, gave me a particular account of the liveries. The road the whole party had taken, after pausing for half an hour at the Ursuline convent, and being joined by two ladies, was decidedly that which led towards Paris; for which information I was indebted to a deformed idiot, one of the invariable hangers on of a French inn. He had

followed the coach, praying for sous, even after he had obtained several ; and the same intense cupidity which had led to his acquiring the information, easily induced him to part with it, though in somewhat garbled form. Thus far prepared for my search—though that was little enough certainly—I mounted my horse, with little Ball-o'-fire ; and set out from Dinan, bending my steps towards Paris. I had entered that town with all my anticipations as bright as summer daylight. All uncertain as was the future, imagination and hope had revelled over it as if it were a field of flowers. But expectation is almost always false. If she hold us forth a cup overflowing with sweets, Fate stands behind and dashes it from our lips ; and if she point to the gathering clouds that hang threatening over our heads, accident raises some kind wind that wafts them far away."

I had entered Dinan, full of hope and delight ; I quitted it with those hopes all melted into air. How far those hopes were afterwards

renewed, and how far they were again dissipated, shall be told hereafter, if Heaven gives me life and leisure to conclude this sketch of my history.

Note Bene. Here endeth the private history of that honourable gentleman, Henry Master-ton, as written by his own hand ; what followeth being compiled by me, John Woolsanger, A.M., in the year of grace 1675-6, from authentic sources, as shall be shown hereafter.

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